AMTIX!

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.3 January 1986
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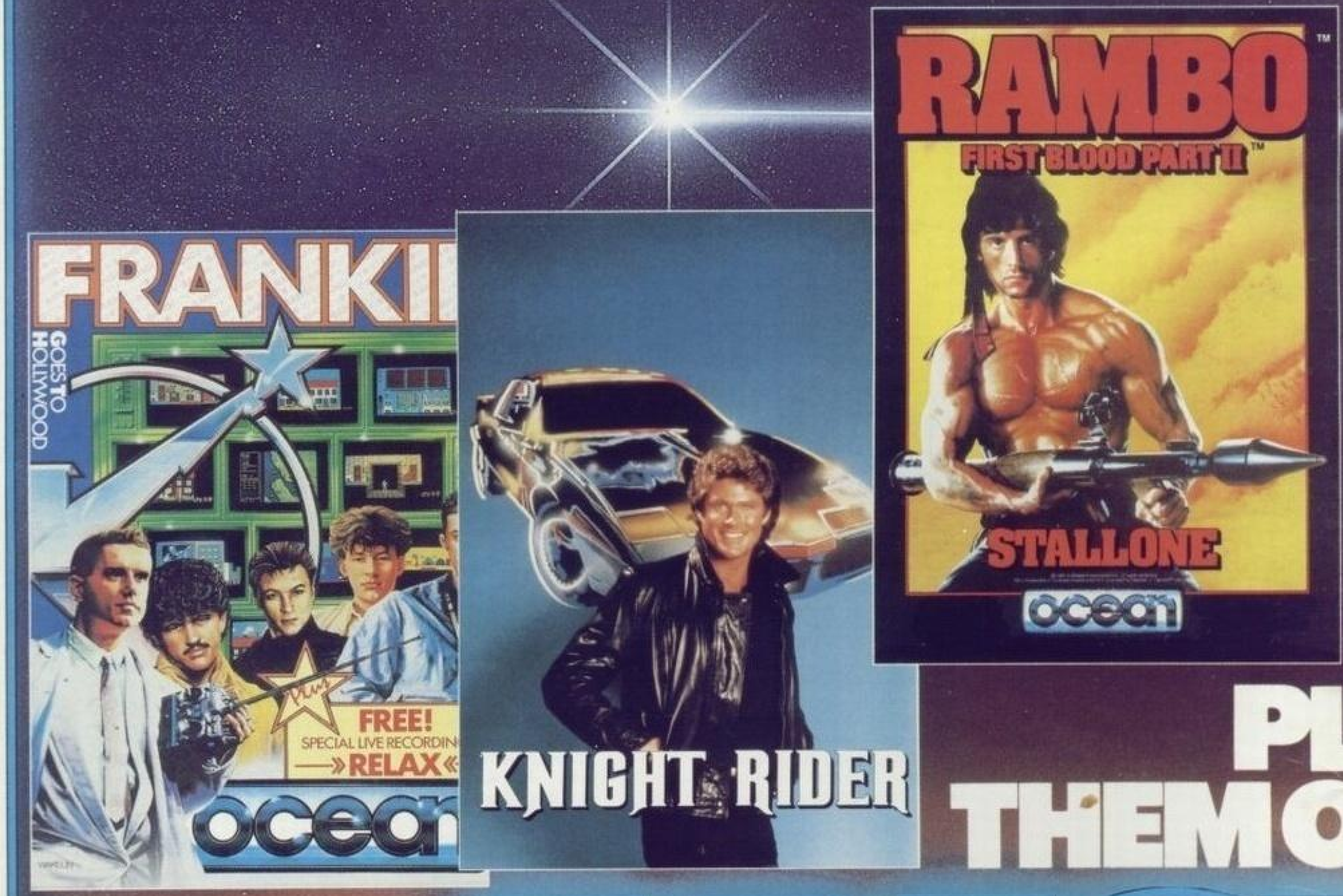
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AMTIX!

ISSUE 3 1985/86

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AMTIX! Magazine is published monthly by **Newsfield Ltd**, 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ

☎ Subscriptions **0584 5851**
☎ Mail Order **0584 5620**
☎ Editorial **0584 5852**
☎ Advertising **0584 5852**

Colour origination by Scan Studios, Wallace Rd, London N1; Printed in England by Redwood Web Offset, Yeoman Way, Trowbridge, Wiltshire; Distribution by **COMAG**, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE

Subscriptions: 12 issues £15.00 post included (UK Mainland);
Europe, 12 issues £22.00 post included. Outside Europe by arrangement in writing. Please check for special offers within the magazine.

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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

Cover by Oliver Frey

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65 FIGHTING CAPTIONS, Part Two
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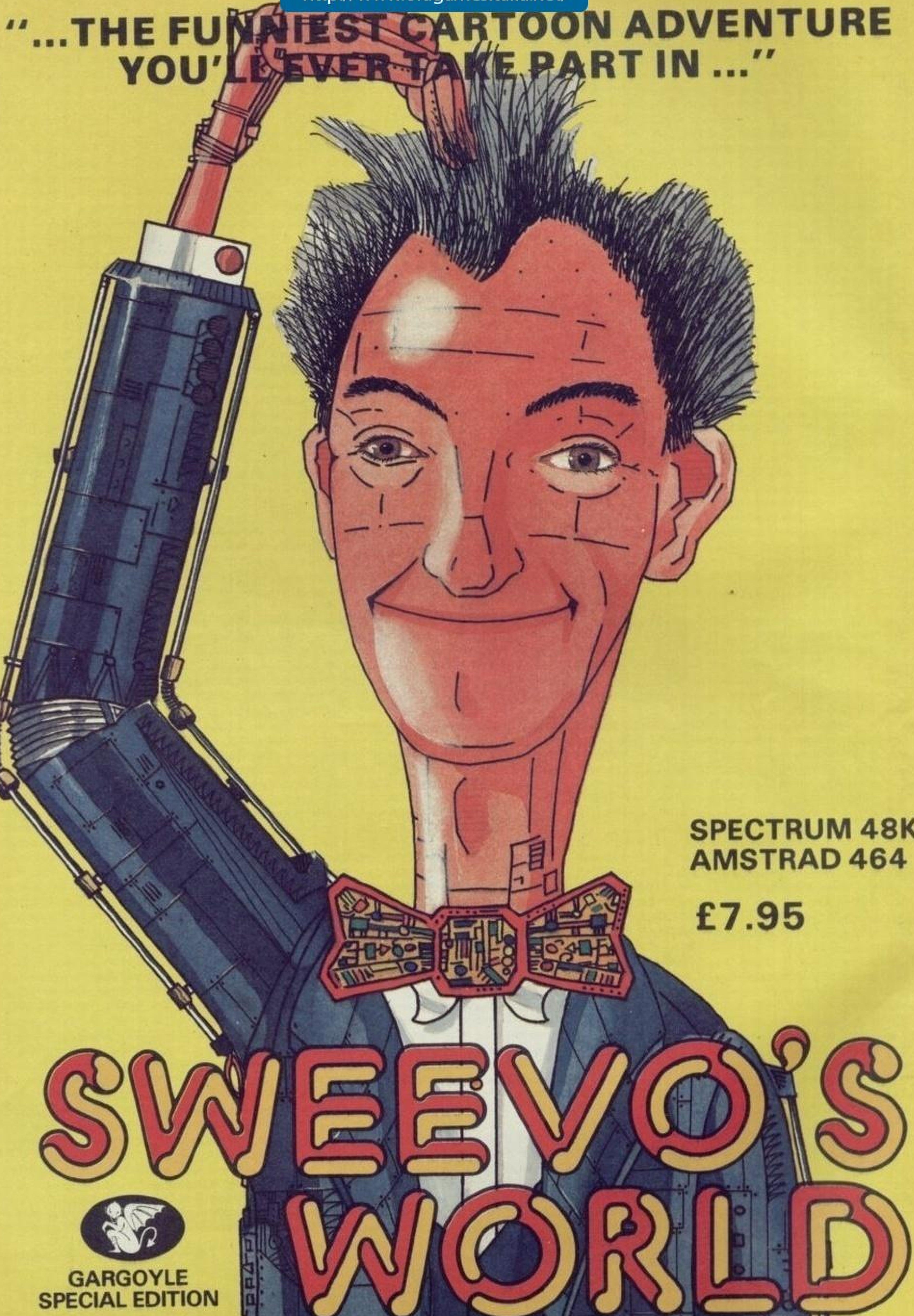
Only people who haven't got a brain at all will miss January 16th it's the day AMTIX! Four is on the streets, that's why!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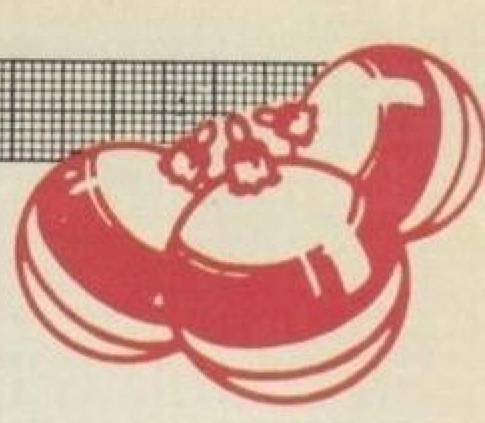

FESTIVE FELICITATIONS

It's a very strange sort of business, publishing magazines — the whole process induces a kind of time distortion, which can be a little difficult to cope with. For instance, as this is being written, although the first snows of the season are descending upon Ludlow, Santa and his Reindeer are still on the Polar Bypass, only a few miles out of the North Pole. The season of Christmas pud is some way off, yet by the time you read this issue, no doubt you'll be full of Christmas Cheer and will have demolished more than a few mince pies.

So it's time to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and an AMTIX! New Year in this column, thereby saving a fortune on Christmas Cards. Cunning, eh?

At the close of 1985, which sees this, the third issue of AMTIX!, hit the streets it might be appropriate to offer a few thanks to people who have made the whole enterprise possible — and blow the odd raspberry in the general direction of folks who have made life a bit more difficult.

A resounding cheer must go up for Amstrad themselves, for getting the whole act on the road so well, and so cheaply. They have done a great deal to make home computing more than just a hobby for the soldering iron wielder who's well into machine code — and more than just a way of having fun for joystick freaks. Like it or loathe it, the CP/M operating system gives access to a multitude of "serious" programs, and Amstrad must be congratulated for bringing CP/M into the home.

On the raspberry front, allow us to blow one at Amstrad for launching the 6128 in such a heartless manner. An excellent machine, offering a great deal for a relatively small sum of money. But the way in which it was launched must have left an awful lot of 664 owners out there who feel more than a little aggrieved by Amstrad's cool commercialism. Rasbos are deserved for refusing, point blank, to offer, or even consider offering, an upgrade.

Software houses deserve a general pat on the back for supporting the new machine, so thanks to all of you. It would be nice, though, if we could see more original work for the Amstrad in 1986. Converting games from other machines is all very well, but it's high time we started to see "converted from the Amstrad" a little more often in the pages of other magazines. No doubt we will, but let's make it soon, eh?

Dk'tronics are a firm who should do well in 1986. Micro historians will already know that Dk first entered the market back in ZX81 days, making hardware add-ons that a certain other computer manufacture couldn't be bothered to get together. Dk'tronics, seem to be approaching the Amstrad marketplace from a similar perspective and they deserve praise for bringing potential relief to 664 owners who want a little more memory. More power to their add-ons in 86!

A mixture of praise and raspberries should be heaped on the shoulders of Amsoft. While THEY don't look likely to be producing any games that will be converted to other machines, and have released some pretty poor programs, they have put out some good software. Without them, Amstrads might not have been put to quite so much "serious" use.

Nineteen Eighty Six will see the Amstrad come of age. No longer will the whole market be controlled and run by the people who make the machines. As software houses continue to produce innovative programs, hardware manufacturers will continue to come up with new and wonderful gizmos to bold onto Straddles' User Port, opening up new horizons. At AMTIX! we intend to continue to keep you up to date with all the latest developments in the Amstrad world, not just on the games front. During 1986, we ourselves should come of age too — three full issues of the magazine are now in the bag, and plans are already afoot for the New Year . . .

Without getting too schmaltzy, we should thank you, our readers, for putting hands in pockets and, ultimately, providing the means by which we eke out our miserable existence between issues. Stay with us, keeping feeding us, and we'll keep writing!

See you next year — in person at the Novotel on January 12th, or on the 16th January if we meet in your local Newsagent's!

The Team

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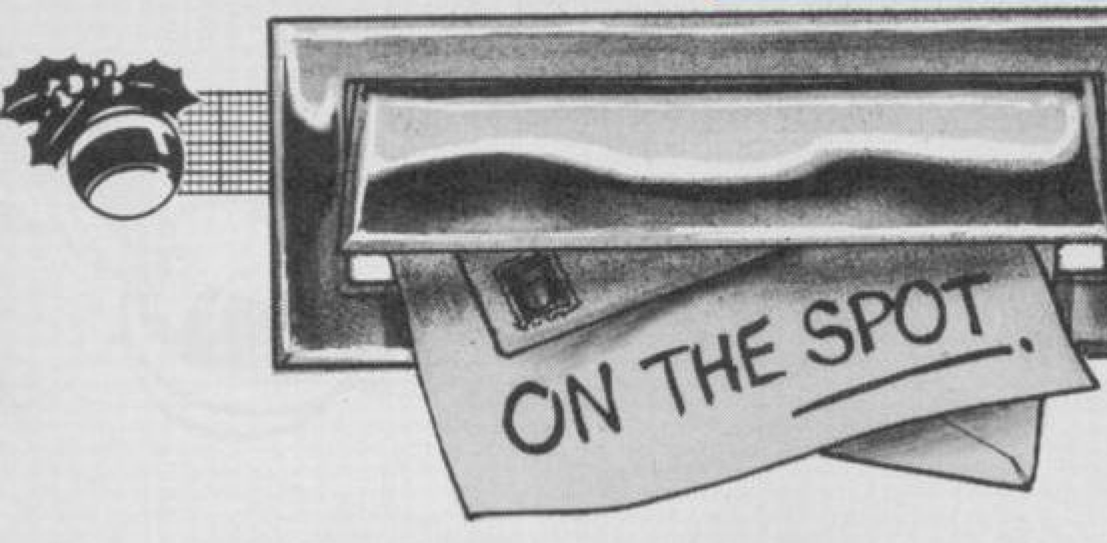


ON THE SPOT

There have been some suggestions that *OTS* outh to be replaced with *OTT*. We refute such nonsense! With the second issue of AMTIX! well out, the On The Spot mailbag has increased considerably, so these pages will soon be swelling to take account of your letters. Thank you for the lively response, and it's nice to see that quite a few readers really DO want to put us on the spot. So — over to you . . .

Our choice letter of the month earns its writer £20 of software of their choice, and for this month it is this one!

DISK PLEASE

Dear AMTIX!
This is the first time I have put pen to paper (so to speak) and written to a computer mag. I purchased a CPC6128 a few weeks ago with plans to use it mainly for business. However, the persistence of my two children plus the temptation of those wonderful games has now got me completely hooked! Why aren't more of the top games on disk?

If software houses are not prepared to go to the expense of putting their top games on disk, the least they could do is to put some form of BASIC loader before the main program, to enable it to be transferred. If it's piracy they are afraid of, surely the pirates will find a way around any protection system anyway?

As the user base for the 6128 grows, those companies who do make disk versions or provide some means of transfer, will certainly gain additional business. After all, tape is not exactly the most reliable form of storage and the time it takes, well!!

One final comment. In your reviews it would be useful if you could state whether software is 6128 compatible. I spent nearly a tenner on *Exploding Fist*, only to find that it will not load on my machine. Try explaining that to your local store — they don't want to know. All they would do was exchange it, and the exchanged version wouldn't load either.

Keep up the good work.

Dennis Trowbridge, Fife.

Glad to hear that you enjoy the serious Amstrad stuff — it is a very important facet of the machine. I am not surprised that you have been ensnared by the huge variety of games, despite your "good" intentions!

The number of titles available on disk is steadily increasing, but the rate at which the quantity of disk software increases is affected by several factors — not least the availability of the disks themselves. Software houses have to be sure than enough people will want to fork out the extra couple of pounds for games on disk before releasing them. Companies are understandably cautious when it comes to stocking titles on disk — a cassette costs around 30p while a disk can cost an extra two pounds, which represents a substantial increase in the value of returns to the producers if a title does not sell out.

As to piracy you are quite correct, almost any protection system can be cracked by a real hacker, but software houses feel that most of the damage is done by the average user who just passes a copy around friends.

***Way of The Exploding Fist* should load onto your 6128 — it loads into mine, at any rate. It might be worth checking your cassette and lead. One further point. If you go into a shop and ask for a game to run on your 6128 only to find that it doesn't, then the shop is obliged to give you a refund. The Sale of Goods Act implies a term into every contract to the effect that a product must be fit for the purpose for which it was sold.**

OTS

Amstrad
CPC 464
Schneider
M
Melbourne House
"BEAT THIS"
Jeoffrey Thompson
WORLD KARATE CHAMPION
The way of the

FURY WITH FIST

Dear AMTIX! In your first edition you imply that *The Way Of The Exploding Fist* is compatible with the 6128. After fiddling with my tape deck for a week I phoned Amstrad. Their comment was that the cassette was not compatible.

I thought I would mention this, as the kids in our school are bound to question your future recommendations.

**Margret Probert,
Worcestershire.**

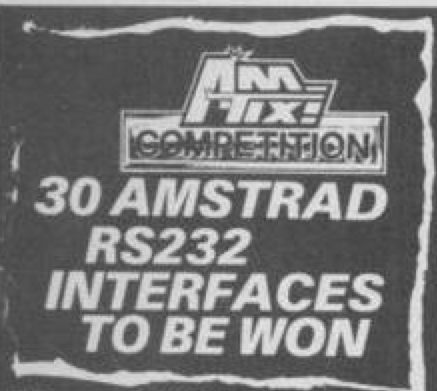
PS I am aware that perhaps the mistake was on Amstrad's part and perhaps we had a faulty tape.

Sorry Margaret, we are in the clear this time. Amstrad are quite wrong to have told you that the game is not compatible with the 6128: it is. Just to make sure, I dashed up to Mail Order, mugged Auntie Aggie and made off with a copy. It loaded first time.

However it may be as well to point out that there is a degree of confusion about which games will work on the 6128 and which ones won't. By now, every software house has heard of the 6128 and they seem secure in the knowledge that it won't be replaced for . . . well weeks. That being the case, any company creating a game that will only run on the 464 should be shot. Corporately.

We feel that since the vast majority of software can be loaded onto any of the three machines, it's a little superfluous to point out the fact in every review. So unless we tell you otherwise, all games reviewed can be loaded onto any Amstrad, with the exception of the PCW 8256 — it doesn't like games so we don't count it.

OTS



AMTIX! COMPETITION

30 AMSTRAD RS232 INTERFACES TO BE WON

ER . . . OOPS!

Dear Amtix
I feel your proof readers may be in for the sack — but that will depend on how you depend to interpret pages 96 and 97 for your otherwise excellent magazine.

In your write-up for the competition for which I attach an entry you state that there will be only ONE RS232 interface awarded (this is the small print!). However in large bold letters at the top of page 97 you state that there are 30 interfaces plus 55 copies of *Raid* on offer.

I look forward to seeing your nice long list of winners, even if my name does not feature!

Aside from this little grouse, I have been waiting for some time for someone to bring out some decent, in depth, reviews of games available for the Amstrad. I must point out that I never stoop to the level of using such a brilliant machine for games playing, w. . e . . e . . ll, not very often, anyway.

Publishing all the cheats is all right for old fogies like me, who's brains aren't quick enough for complex adventure games — but don't they take some of the fun away for the kids? My daughter can locate everything needed quickly enough anyway, without you publishing maps etc
Martin Cantrill, Hexham

Such assumptions Mr Cantrill! Proof Readers; in the plural! We can't sack a proof reader, let alone several, as we haven't got one, as such. We have, however, prodded the Competition Minion who wrote the piece with a pointed instrument. Several times. Hard.

We'll have to abide by 'the small print' in this case: there'll be no money in the tea kitty if we have to supply 30 interfaces . . . Apologies all round.

On the subject of pokes, cheats and maps you raise an interesting point. In many ways, tip 'n hints on games seem to have become almost as important as the games themselves in some circles. To be fair, it's hardly reasonable to argue that printing hints takes the fun out of games for some people — they don't have to read that particular section of the magazine if they don't want their fun spoiled, now do they?
OTS

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Dear Sirs
I am 64 years old and am fairly thick with it. I was presented with my first computer (Amstrad 464) nine months ago and need all the 'user friendliness' I can get.

I buy three magazines written for the Amstrad regularly and find that yours is the best. I can see a great future for you, provided that you do not assume, as one of your competitors does, that all readers are aged 18, brilliant programmers from birth, who know all the intricate details of hardware which is advertised and have bottomless pockets. In addition to this, they are guilty of awful spelling errors, advertising covering 78% of the magazine, 15% of space for details about hardware which we don't understand and 7% for software reviews. The offending magazine seems to be aimed exclusively at those clever gentlemen who know all the answers about computing.

Success must surely lie in keeping the ignorant ones happy as there are far more of us! I would suggest that a couple of pages of your magazine should be devoted to simple question and answer material. I would also like to see more detail being supplied by software firms about their products. The latest tape I bought seemed to be about a prehistoric chap lurching down an endless street — and had it not been for the info you supplied in your magazine, I would have remained totally ignorant of his future . . . he is my first taste of 'adventure' and I was mystified. You do a splendid job of steering us away from inferior software.
Robert Lamb, Cottingham, Yorks

It is surprising how many 'older' people are involved in home computing — finding out about the intricacies of your machine and picking up programming technique if you get serious can be a time consuming task. It is generally only people with time on their hands who can really get into the subject, and such people tend to be at school, unemployed, or retired.

We do try to bear in mind that not everyone is a computer whizz, and will continue to run articles of a slightly more technical nature which offer an introduction to areas of computing in the hope that our readers will be able to continue their travels on their own.

It can be very a very daunting task, getting to grips with computing, particularly if you're on your own. It's well worth getting in touch with — or maybe even starting — a local user group. It's well worth meeting other computer users socially, as lots of tips and hints tend to get exchanged and personal advice from people who've encountered problems similar to your own is often much more useful than access to a library of books. People are generally more 'user friendly' than the printed word!
OTS

THIS MONTH'S TOKEN LOONIE

Dear Amtix
You mentioned in issue one that people could write you letters about anything. Well I decided to take you up on that offer, but my letter will be about nothing. Now a lot of people know nothing already, even if they are too modest to admit it.

If you have only just finally realised I ws not joking when I told you nothing had anything to do with this letter, then let me suddenly dispel all doubts. Nothing has nothing to do with this letter. As the more intelligent among you will by now have realised, this letter is entirely concerned with Level 9 adventures. For the unknowing amongst you, be warned. Adventures can seriously damage your mentality — take me as a classic example.

My final paragraph is an offer of help to anyone stuck in Return to Eden and Forest at Worlds End, both of which I have completed. I can also offer a lesser degree of help in Lords of Time and Dungeon Adventure. I look forward to hearing from fellow aventurers.
Alan Wright, 54 Hawkhill Rd, Alloa, Clacks, Scotland

Nothing surprises us, nothing at all. Let's hope people who drop Alan a line about adventures receive more than nothing in reply! Nice offer, though Alan, thanks.
OTS

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY!

Dear Amtix!
How those poor people who find themselves lumbered with a "phased out" computer must feel. First of all they are quite happy, clacking away on their new Amstrad, then suddenly they find themselves lumbered with a technical Dodo! — or need they get stuck with it? Maybe Amstrad will come to their senses and offer a trade-in deal, for those who want to change computers?
Keith Patient, Walthamstow, London

PS Any BINDERS for Amtix!

AMTIX! binders are underway, and should be available fairly early in the new year. No *really* firm details just yet, though.

It seems there's going to be little point in waiting for an upgrade from Amstrad themselves. People with 464s may wish to turn to a memory expansion facility offered by Dk'tronics, reviewed in Amtech this issue . . . patience will get them nowhere, as it's a firm "thumbs down" from Amstrad when it comes to doing favours for 464 owners. Their final word is "no", quite clearly.
OTS

TO THE POINT

Amtix! No 1, Nov 85
What a missed opportunity — more like a coloured comic. Games will be like a DODO in a year's time — AMTECH SECTION: FULL MARKS — more of this, less of the others. Colour has made lower part of page 71 illegible. I'm sure you can do better than this.
K Douglas, Marlow, Bucks

Er Yes. You don't have to print in black and white to be serious (but you do have to be careful of the blues). Will try harder next term — er issue. Not convinced about the Dodos, though.
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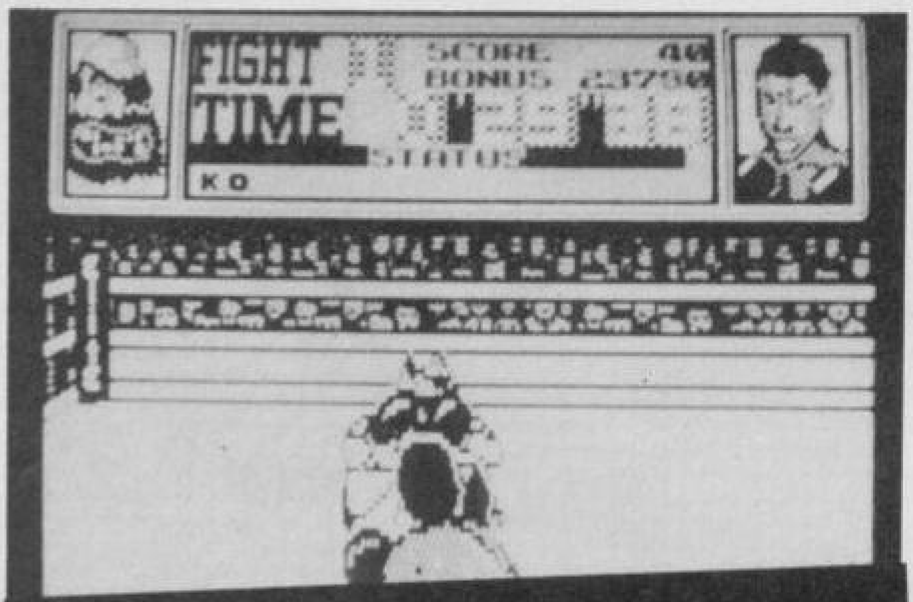
OF EGGS AND CHICKENS

Dear Amtix!
I am a teacher with a young family (Sarah 8, Benjamin 5) and I am on the brink of writing out a cheque for a 6128. Why only on the brink, you may ask, and not over the edge yet!

Well, I picked up your magazine and while it was useful in convincing me that the 6128 has a great future, AMTIX! also pointed out, unintentionally, that there was not a lot of software around for it yet. Every mouth watering game (90% plus) tended to have "cass" after it. Any chance of a list of titles with disk(k?!) after them in future?
Steve Sharp, Atherstone, Warks

It's not entirely up to us, and as you will see from a reply to another letter this month, releasing games on dis(c)ks put software houses in a bit of a chicken and egg situation. You see, if you had already bought your 6128, you'd be yet another customer putting pressure on software producers to release on dis(k)c. They'll catch on, given time and then we'll no doubt have a long list for you to peruse fairly soon. Meanwhile, you might have to cope with cassettes.

OTS



TIME
94
FREEZER TEMP

DASTARDLY PLOT?

Comrades
It would appear that you have some CRASH infiltrators in your midst. They have overrun your AMTIPS section. For instance, the tips for *Starion* are laid out exactly the same way as in CRASH and the tips for *Rocky Horror Show* are the same — if you can call them tips. I knew what help was given within 1 hour of first playing.

Also, the tips for *Frank Bruno's Boxing* were the same as in Issue 18 of CRASH. Other than those complaints, AMTIX! is great. Oh! By the Way. I've found that if you fly the ship you're in *Starstrike* and press "x" 24 times, nothing happens!
Philip Stubbs, Moseley, Birmingham

True, true, but they are (and were) much better tips than you have to offer Phil! It's unlikely that all that many AMTIX! readers had already had the benefit of the aforementioned tips, although quite a few folks have moved from the Spectrum and CRASH to the Amstrad and AMTIX!, judging by our mailbag. With the duplication of games, duplication of tips is almost inevitable — but just wait until Robin gets into his stride with POKES . . .

OTS

ONE AND ONE IS . . . THREE?

Dear Amtix!
After I read through the magazine I thought to myself that there are two other things needed in it.

First of all, how about a software chart for the games: which are the best each month? Secondly, there should be some advertisements for shops selling games, because most places don't have the games you want. It would be nice to be able to send off for games advertised in the magazine. Thirdly, there are too many games reviewed each month — you'll go through the games too quickly if you're not careful.
Martin Sharratt, Derby

Much pondering is currently underway about the whole subject of running a chart in AMTIX! and it would be interesting to hear other readers views on the subject. Should it be reader-driven, to use a snippet of jargon, with folks voting for their choice - or should the information be gleaned from the industry?

Tut, tut. Don't you read the advertisements Martin; Auntie Aggie of AMTIX! Mail Order is champing at the bit, waiting to exchange your hard-earned for dis(k)ks and tapes of your choice.

And thirdly, Oh No We Won't!

OTS

EDUCATIONAL ANOMIE

Dear Amtix!
I have an Amstrad 464 and a nine year old daughter who would like to use it to help with schoolwork (as well as play games). The problem is, no magazine seems to have been any help, however small, on software of this nature. Maybe you could change that and have the occasional page devoted to "learning" cassettes, and games that aid learning, too.
Mrs Lynn Patterson, Northumberland

Funny you should say that, Mrs P. We hope to start doing just that, next issue. And rather than just the "odd page", we hope to find a regular slot for educational software. We have an Educational Correspondent in our sights, but if you can't wait any longer, you might wish to get in touch with a new organisation, British Educational Software Associates — at 4 Little Essex Street, London, WC2R 3LF Tel: 01 836 6633. BESA was formed to promote educational software in general, and should be able to help, as it represents a group of leading Educational Software Houses.

OTS

SHORT AND SWEET

. . . .there is just one thing you missed out, and that is a top 20 chart . . .
Michael Royle, Salford

Or Top Thirty, or Top Ten. Let's hear what you want!

. . . the review of ZEDIS was extremely difficult to read, and my eyesight is reasonably good. The point is, that small black type on a dotted blue and white background is VERY difficult to read. If you want people to buy AMTIX!, I suggest you print easily read articles.
P Doherty, Luton, Beds

Sometimes they are very difficult to write you know. Why should we . . . . No. We concede defeat. It won't happen again, and the Artroom Person who was very keen on dotted blue and white backgrounds has had his mind changed

. . . the most enjoyable aspect of your magazine is when you talk about how the games are either very good or else really pathetic. When I bought my first mag I thought that the articles would miss out all the bad things and just print the good things about the software . . .
Ronnie Sagar, Blackpool, Lancs

Fearless and free, that's us to a T. Or so someone once rhymed. There is a middle ground, and we write about that too!

Can I make a suggestion about your reviews? It would be nice if you could say how a game looks on my poor old green screen, and mention it if a game has a colour/green screen option, like *Roland in Time*.
Simon Protheroe, Dudley, West Midlands

Fair comment, Simon. The trouble is, we're all a little spoilt by our shiny colour monitors, and have got a little carried away. We'll think Green Screen a bit more positively in future.

That's it for another month. Watch out for a bit more letter space in the next issue, and if you have anything to say about AMTIX!, Amstrad computers or games software, or indeed the universe in general, then write to ON THE SPOT, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB and let the AMTIX! On The Spot Team know what's on your mind.

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ocean

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KUMA'S 'BEST GAME YET'

Kuma have announced *Renegade*, their latest arcade adventure for the Amstrad computer range. The game involves finding a priceless jewel which has been hidden in the labyrinthine headquarters of a criminal mastermind. Gaining access to the complex is itself difficult, but there is more to the game than this. There are twenty-eight different nasties to encounter and a wide variety of objects (some of which re-configure the maze).

Jon Day, Sales Manager of Kuma, said "*Renegade* is our best game yet. There is plenty of action and shooting involved but the player must also use strategy to complete the game successfully; a winning combination."

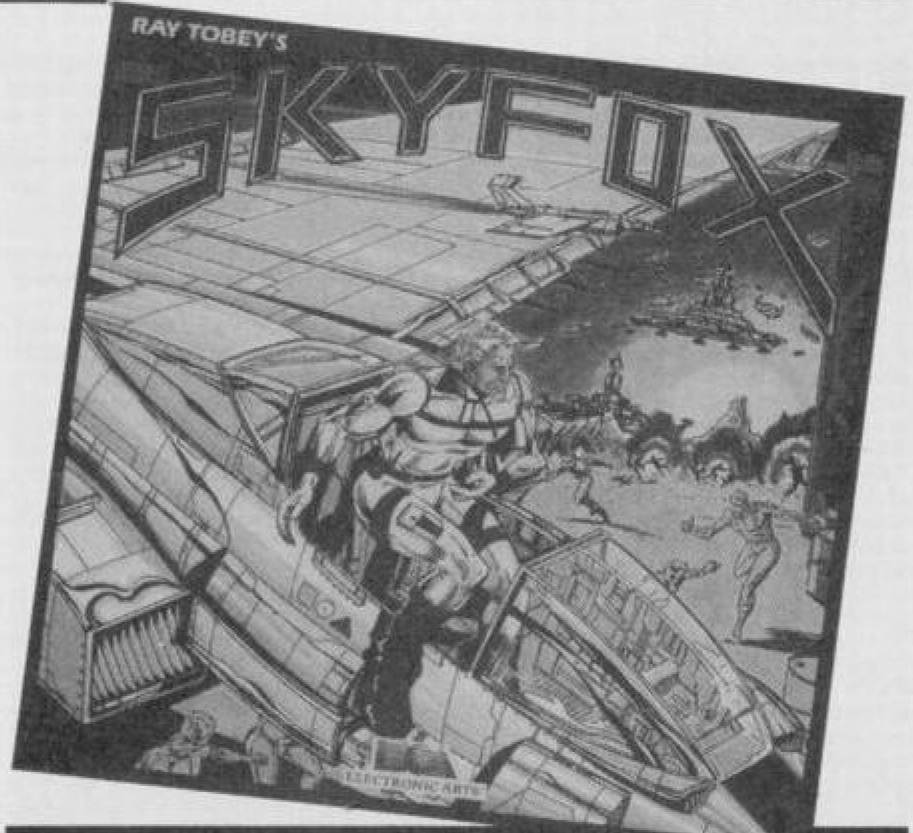
Mr Day's words will soon be put to the test as *Renegade* should be available for £6.95 on cassette by the time you read this. A disk version is to follow. Stay tuned for a review . . .

THE RETURN OF ERROL FLYNN?

Swashbuckling hero of Saturday morning cinema, *Zorro* will soon be appearing on the monitor screen as opposed to the silver one. Datasoft, the people who originally conceived the project have finished the C64 version and US Gold are now feverishly working away on the Amstrad conversion. Set in the 19th century in down town Los Angeles, Zorro has to rescue a damsel in much distress. There are many Rube Goldberg (who is he?) style puzzles to solve — all logical and frustratingly simple, once you've figured them out. Or who Rube Goldber is. *Zorro* should be sproinging aroun on Amstrad screens in time for the Christmas rush, arriving on cassette at £9.95.

AMSTRAD BIRDSONGS

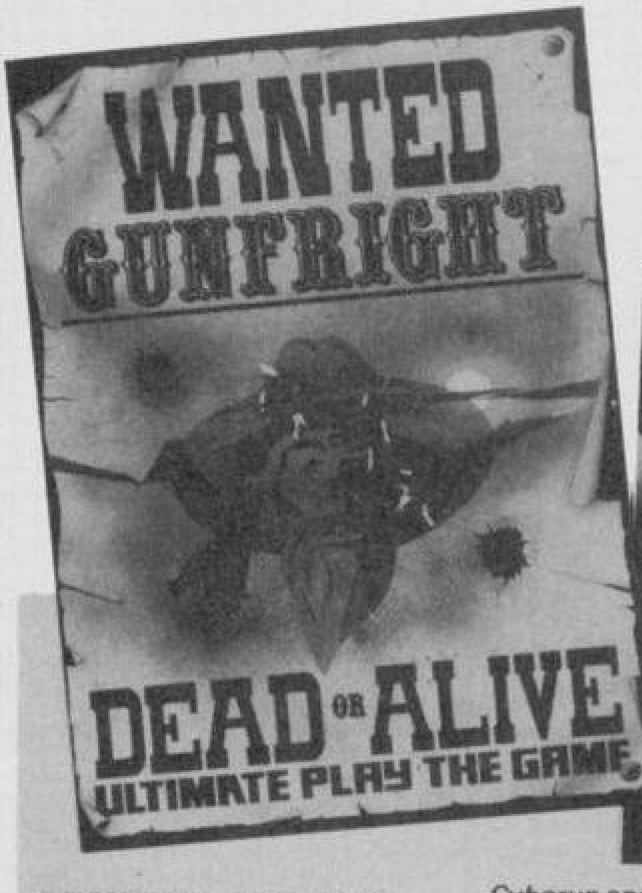
The egotistically named Rainbird Software, set up by British Telecom and run by Tony Rainbird, will soon be releasing *The Music System* and *Advanced Music System* for the Amstrad. Having originally appeared on the BBC nearly year back, quite a few alterations and enhancements have been made to the original specification. Island Logic, programmers of *TMS* and a subdivision of Island records, have incorporated facilities for managing a synth connected through MIDI on the back of your Amstrad. *The Music System* is priced at £14.95 for tape and £17.95 for disk. *Advanced Music System* will set you back £39.95 and is available on disk only.



FROM FLIGHT SIMULATORS TO STRATEGY GAMES

After receiving a rave review and Sizzler status in our sister journal, ZZAP! 64, *Skyfox* is due to be converted from the Commodore 64 onto the beloved Amstrad. The press release says that '*Skyfox* is a 3D scrolling flight simulator that includes 15 scenarios, five skill levels plus air to air and air to ground combat modes'. In layperson's terms that means it's a jolly good blast for £8.95 — available on cassette and disk in the near future.

Also a possible release in the near future is *Think*, a sort of Connect Four derivative designed by Tigress, originators of Domark's *A View to a Kill*. Though a variation on a theme there are several new extra functions included. A tutorial will ease you through the trials and tribulations of learning while a problem solving section allows you to test your new found skills. Think should be ready for some time early next year, appearing on the Ariolasoft label.

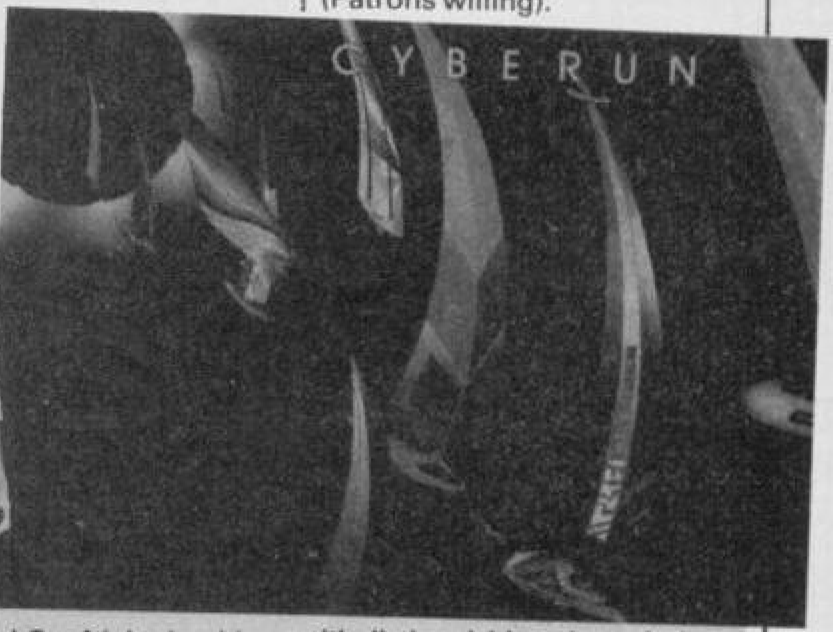


YOUR COMPUTERS SHOULD BE TALKING TO EACH OTHER

News has reached this humble minion of a variety of interfaces for the Amstrad micros, available from Commotion of Enfield, who supply the DCP Microdevelopments range. DCP have developed an 'Intercard System' which allow a basic package to be modified so that only one interface need be manufactured for any given micro. Owners buy the Intercard for their particular system and can then speak to any other computer (as long as it has the correct Intercard) by connecting a common interface. The Amstrad Intercard (464/664 compatible) costs £17.35. The system requires more than just this device however, and those requiring more information about the system should contact Commotion on 01–804 1378.

SPONTANTEOUS SOFTWARE

Previously unheard of, **Patrons Computer Services** are due to produce an EPROM programmer for the full fleet of Amstrad Micros. Slotting into the expansion port, *Rombus* will enable the end user to create EPROMS containing instantly accessible software. No more waiting ten minutes for any of your home grown utilities to load. The ROMdriver software is menu driven, so it should prove easy to use even for the most inexperienced EPROM programmer. The software is supplied on tape as standard, though for extra pennies it's possible to upgrade to disk — or even EPROM. *Rombus* will set you back £59.95 and should be reviewed in next issue's Amtech (Patrons willing).



BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK BUT WHERE ARE THE GAMES?

Shortly due for release are two new titles from Ultimate. *Cyberun* and *Gunfright* should be available by the time you read this, but at the moment, following true to Ultimate style, there are "no details available". What we DO know is that both titles will be 'packaged in Ultimate's rigid plastic cartons with distinguishing glossy facia artwork'. I know it doesn't make very interesting reading but you should be able to get a bit of an idea what they'll be like from the illustrations appearing elsewhere on this page (Artroom willing).

FREL VENTURES OUT ON THE AMSTRAD

Ludlow add-on producer, Frel Ltd have just created their first Amstrad widget, the **Joycon** Interface. A problem many a Straddles owner may well have come across is the inability to attach more than one joystick to the machine — unless, of course, a set of the official Amstrad joysticks is owned. Frel's handy little doobrie allows two standard joysticks to be slipped into the one port supplied on the machine. Compatible with the complete range of Amstrad machines, **Joycon** retails at £4.95 and will soon be available through both mail order and retail outlets.

JOYCON 1
JOYCON 2

THE REAL POEL — NEWSTAR STORY

William Poel, managing director of Newstar Software, is apparently concerned with some of the 'garbled' messages appearing in the computer press regarding his departure from Amstrad, feeling that the circumstances have been 'mauled by the media'.

He sees the purchase of Newstar as a logical progression from his role within Amstrad itself and he intends to support CPM software for the Amstrad range. Mr Poel also feels that his company "can do for applications software what Amstrad has done for hardware".

Amongst the many items of software available from Newstar (some of which are exclusive), is the NewWord wordprocessing/mailmerge package, complete with 45,000 word spell checker which sells for £69 inclusive of VAT and is road tested this issue.

Mr Poel left Amstrad under perfectly amicable circumstances simply to support the CPM business side of Amstrad computing, as he was disturbed by the "indifference of the competition".

OF GODS AND WARS AND TRIVIAL PURSUITS

A new software house has recently been formed by three university undergraduates with previous experience of mostly BBC and Amstrad programming. Responsible for several hit titles including *Killer Gorilla*, *Blockbuster* and *Mr Ee*, Arcana's first Amstrad release is *Powerplay, the game of the Gods*. Within *Powerplay* each player assumes the role of an ancient Greek god and controls a group of mythical warriors in a 3D courtyard. Really a type of trivia quiz game, the different groups of warriors must do battle by answering a variety of questions on one of four topics. (*Beats mindless violence anyway* — **ED.) The package is set to contain over two thousand different questions and should appear on the Amstrad sometime in the New Year on disk based — probably accessing the drive to retrieve new sets of questions. Though priced a little above average at £14.95, most mere mortals should be able afford to be god for a day.**

LCP SYNDROME SPREADS

Earlier this year, the research team at Activision discovered that there were tiny humanoid creatures actually living inside Commodore micros. After successful communication with these interesting creatures and exploration of their habitat (a kind of two and a half story maissonette), they released the *Little Computer People Discovery Kit* so that owners of the said micro could also contact these friendly and individualistic folk. It now transpires that these creatures may also inhabit the Amstrad range of computers. This should mean that an *LCP* kit should be available early in the New Year.

The kit consists of a disk (the Little Computer People appear to love software), deed of ownership (after all, they are *pet* people) the LCP magazine and an ownership guide to help prevent your pet person being killed off by careless owners. Keep your ears and eyes peeled for more news.

AN OASIS IN THE OCEAN?

Following Ocean's acquisition of Oasis software, utility programmers extrordinaire, a wealth of programmer's aids are set to appear under Ocean's **IQ** label. First to be released for the Amstrad is *Laser Basic*, an extensions package adding more than two hundred commands to the basic ROM. Handiest additions among the new command set are a group of functions that provide upto 255 software sprites, positionable anywhere on the screen. Other handy additions include the ability to access the Z80 interrupt system with a flexibility usually only found in machine code. Also part of the package are comprehensive sprite and music editors that produce data in a form compatible with your *Laser Basic* programs.

Oasis have not been lazy during their last couple of months' silence and other products due to be released under Ocean include a Compiler turning *Laser Basic* programs into fast, compact machine code, a Z80 macro assembler with a very speedy assembly time and *White Lighting*, an extended version of Forth specially designed for producing game type programs. Laser Basic will shortly be available at £14.95 for tape and £19.95 for disk while *White Lightning*, the Compiler and the Assembler should be ready some time in the new year. Watch Amtech for detailed, in depth reviews.

MIGHTY MICRO
M.A.U.C.

NORTHERN AMSTERS PROLIFERATE

For some reason there seems to be a proliferation of Amstrad users in the Manchester area . . . . well, enough to warrant two user groups being set up in that fair northern city. The Northwest Users Club prints a weekly newsletter and a monthly news magazine. Membership is a paltry £8.95 for one year. Membership forms are available from Mr P. Clarke, 41 Millwall Close, Gorton, Manchester M18 8LL.

The Manchester Amstrad User Club has meetings every Monday evening at the Openshaw Technical College. A newsletter is also published once a month and sent to the club's members nationwide. To join you'll have to pay five pounds for a year's membership. Further information is available from Steve Stanner, 21 Gatlings Avenue, Longsight, Manchester, M12 5SX.

HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN

Mikro-Gen, £9.95 cass
Author: The Mikro-Gen team

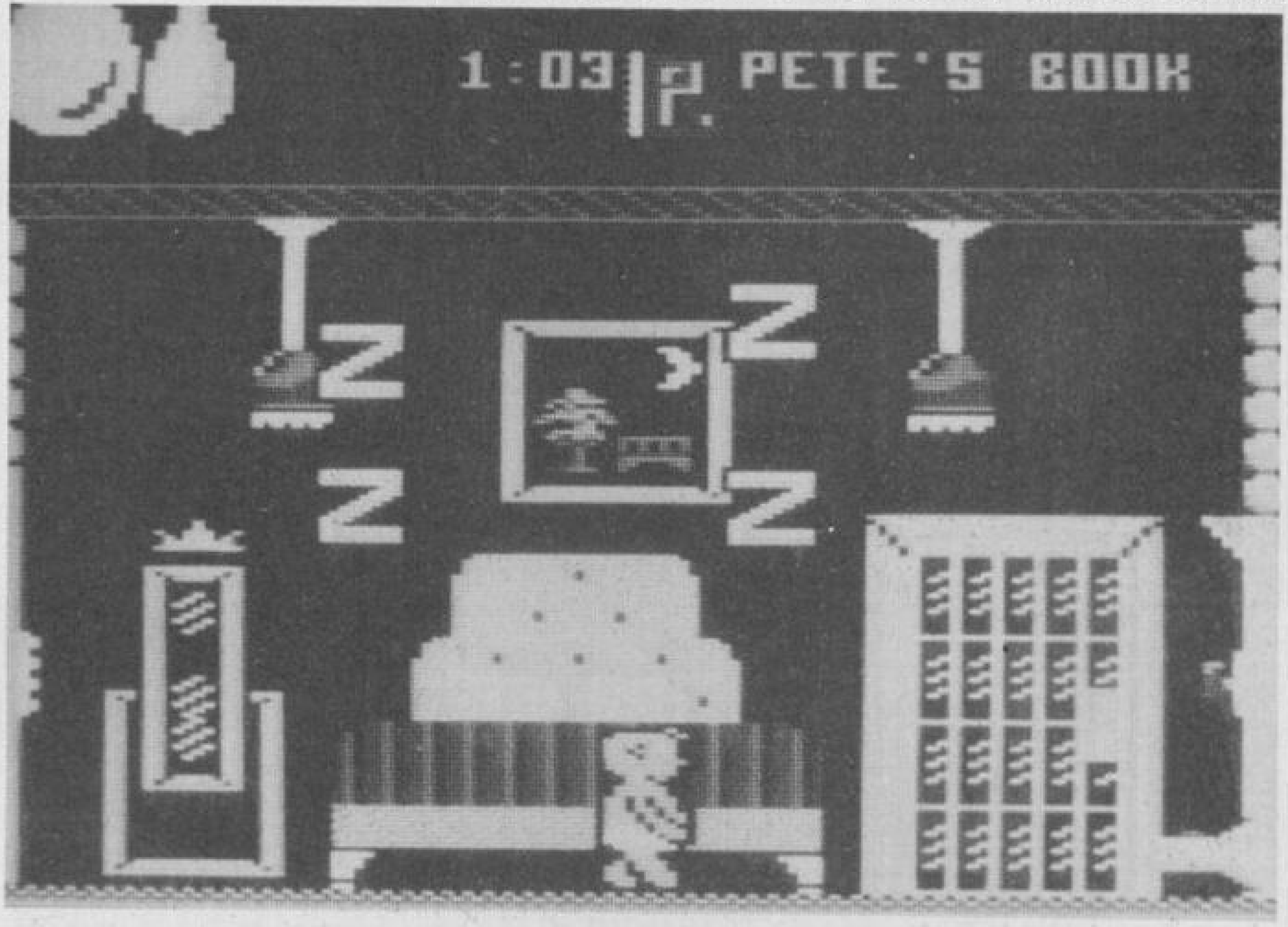
Now you should all remember Herbert. He's the little chap from the Week family whose ineptitude became world renowned in *Everyone's a Wally*. In this game Herbert has become separated from his Mum and Dad during a visit to the local department store. It is up to you, the player to guide him back to his parents who are waiting for him in the 'LOST AND FOUND' department.

The game begins with Herbert in the toy department at 1 pm: the store closes at 5.30 and you have four and a half hours to reunite Herbert with his parentals, since the game is played in real time. In both style and presentation *Herberts Dummy Run* is similar to *Everyone's a Wally*, which is not surprising as it's the third game in the Wally trilogy! *Dummy Run* is a graphical adventure game that calls for a high degree of arcade skill as well as a degree of lateral thinking. The opening screen is typical of the game: Herbert finds himself standing on a box in the toy department; you notice at the top of the screen a series of shelves loaded with a wide variety of toys. How can Herbert reach up there? Well of course the box he's standing on is a Jack-in-the-box, and when the key has been fetched the spring action will propel him up onto the shelf.

As with the other Wally games, many of the screens take the form of well known arcade games. One screen can only be solved by dismantling a wall, 'Breakout' style — if you manage this the resultant pat on the head is well deserved.

The game would be too easy if you could pick up and carry every object that you came across. Only being able to carry two objects at a time forces you to do a little forward thinking. At the top of the screen you are reminded of what objects are in your possession — the one that you have had for the longest is automatically exchanged for another 'collectable' piece as you walk past it. As you explore the store looking for the ways and means to solve the game you are under constant pressure from a wide variety of mobile 'thingies'. You have three lives and when you come into contact with some of the nasties your energy, shown by a large tear that fills up, will be reduced until you escape the meanies, or lose that life. A few mobiles kill immediately on contact so you will have to learn to identify them quickly. You are able to reverse the drain on your energy by eating the sweets found scattered around the store.

For his efforts, Herbert is rewarded with his favourite jelly babies, and the closer he he is to finding his parents the more he will get. All told the game extends for over twenty five screens, but don't expect Herbert to get fat on jelly babies too soon!



SENSATIONAL SOFTWARE FROM
MIKRO-GEN
Herbert's
Dummy Run

CRITICISM

1 At last the Amstrad has caught up with the Wally family. The fans should be well pleased with this rendition. The graphics are very effective and the overall game play should keep you chewing your fingers to the stub. The game includes some very nice ideas, and some of the arcade rooms take a great deal of patience and skill to defeat, but defeat them you must if you are to have any hope of getting back to the parentals. For me this was the best in the series, probably because it was a little less infuriating with the rest of the family safely out of the way. I dare say some will miss the other characters. However I do think the asking price of £9.95 is a little steep.

2 *Herbert's Dummy Run* has been skillfully converted from the Spectrum original. Mikro-Gen certainly seem to have got the hang of the Amstrad graphics, so the look of the game is very pleasing. I can't help feeling that if as much attention had been paid to the sound the game would have been a lot more playable. That really brings me to my biggest complaint. I really think it's time that we left this Wally format, it is beginning to get very tired and well used. While I can appreciate that it is a new game to the Amstrad there are a number of other games which have been converted to the Amstrad that tend to leave this behind in terms of originality and content.

3 *Mikro-Gen are taking the opportunity of exploiting individual characters in games which offer the same style of gameplay as the other Wally games. Of course there are a number of improvements, such as the mini arcade sequences which keep you sitting on the edge of your seat. But overall this is the same type of highly graphical arcade adventure. I know that the Wally fans will rave over this latest addition to the family but I wouldn't mind seeing another game put together with such care but with something or a more original theme. The Wally family are beginning to get a little tired.*

Presentation 60%
Good game options but the box is very flimsy

Graphics 88%
Plenty of colour and nice shading effects; the graphics do a great deal for the game.

Sound 56%
Much could have been done in this department to make the game more complete.

Playability 77%
If you enjoy this type of arcade adventure then you will fall for this

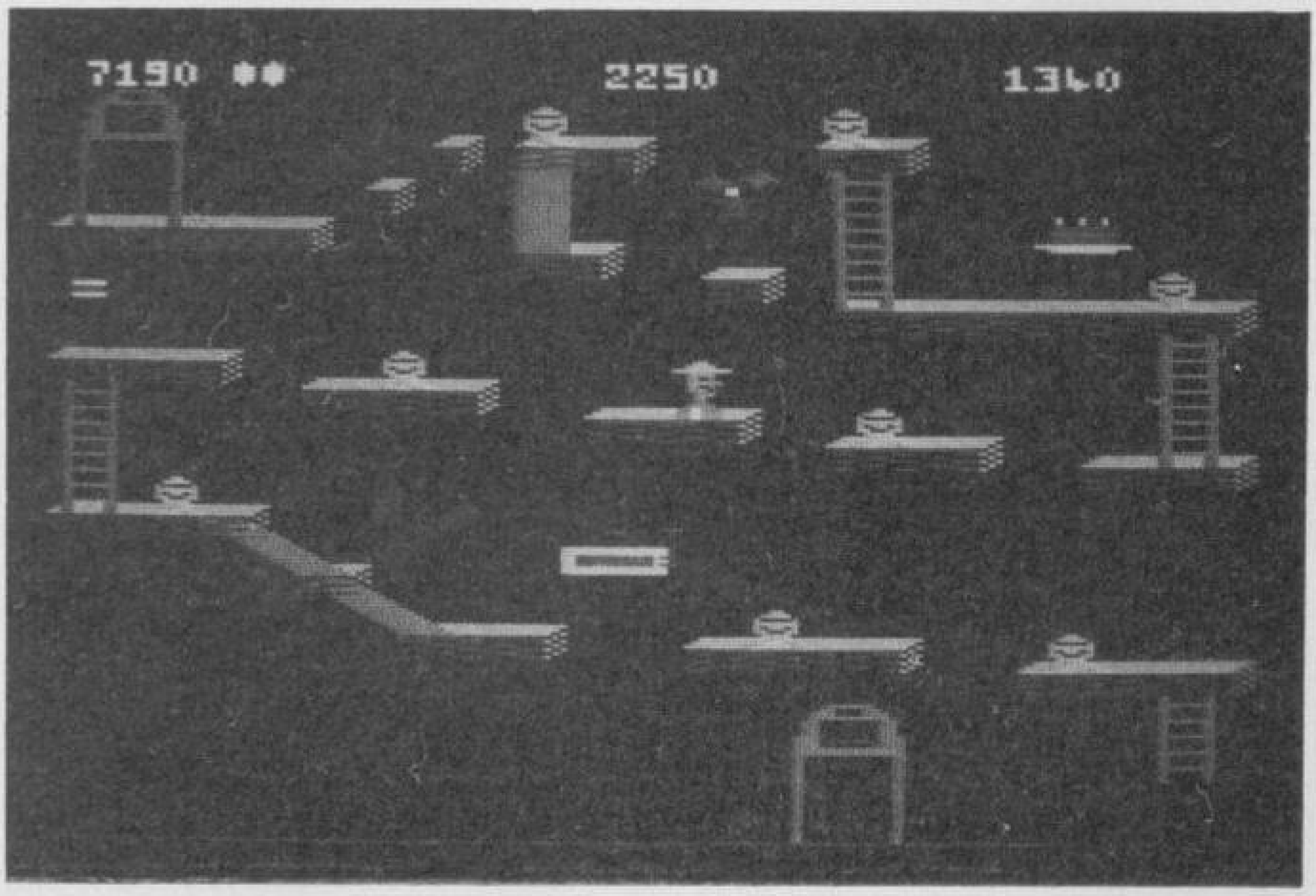
Addictive qualities 78%
The content and the graphics together with the strenuous task should keep you gurgling for hours

Value For Money 67%
Ten pounds is a little steep but it will be worth every penny to the Wally lovers

Overall 83%
The graphics are well up to standard and above average but age is beginning to show.

BOUNTY BOB

US Gold, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
Author: Bill Hogue and Curtis Mikolyski



When the world's historians begin to research the history of computer games they will settle on *Bounty Bob* with some interest. *Bounty Bob* has a long and distinguished lineage. The game is related to *Miner 2049'er*, the first ever platform game, originally written for the Atari and Commodore 64. It was from that game that the now legendary *Manic Miner* was developed. If you aren't familiar with *Miner 2049'er* then a quick history may put you in the picture.

Miner 2049'er is set in the mine of Yukon Yohan, an evil swine who has dumped radioactive waste in the caverns and turned all the little furry creatures who stored their food there into horrible, marauding mutants. The idea is to enter the caves, steal all the radioactive stuff (whilst dodging the mutants) and escape. *Bounty Bob* is set in the same mine but this time the task is to claim every section of framework, or platforms. The edge of the platforms are shaded but as you pass Bob over them the shading clears so you can see where you've been — a bit like a 'Painter'. Each screen has a time limit.

Control, although being for a standard left/right up/down ladders and jump game, has a novel touch — a variable jumping distance. To make a short jump, leap straight up in the air and wait until Bob's almost at the peak of his travel before pressing the left or right key. To make a long jump, press the direction key as soon as you press jump.

Over the mine's long history many objects have been abandoned within it. All of them are now contaminated by the radiation but Bob can use this to his advantage. When in possession of an object the mutants want to keep away so they turn into nice cuddly creatures and hope Bob will ignore them. To murder mutants you need to collect one of the items littered about the screen, all of them everyday things like radios, coffee pots and candelabras, and this adds points to your score. The mutants turn green when you pick an object up, and then die when you run into one. After a while they flash a couple of times and return to their normal, deadly selves. There are usually quite a few objects littered about the screen, but they have to be used quite sparingly since getting from one mutant to another usually takes a while.

If you lose a life on a screen you are reincarnated, as are the objects — but the mutants you managed to kill stay dead. And you don't have to re-walk the parts of the platform you covered before meeting your end, which makes life that bit easier.

On some screens there are devices to help you travel to the more inaccessible platforms. These vary from conventional lifts to the more exotic matter transference beams that teletransport you from point to another. Look out for the 'super energy food bars' — eating one speeds you up and jumping power is increased by a factor of three, allowing you to jump huge gaps between platforms. Very handy indeed!

To descend, slides connect some platforms, but before you descend to a lower platform, take a good look at what's below you — sometimes there's a rampaging mutant at the bottom and it doesn't do you much good landing on it if it's flashing!

CRITICISM

1 **Bounty Bob *is an advanced platform game with nasties wandering about. The nasty can only be killed by Bob for short periods which makes the game pretty frustrating when you catch up with one only to discover that the vulnerable time is over. The game can be fairly complicated to control since the joystick option still requires some machinery to be controlled from the keyboard. Graphics are effective but blocky and the colours tend to be a little gaudy which makes some screens a little unclear. The sound is good but after a while it became monotonous and had me reaching for the volume control. I'm not too sure where the 'exciting music' comes into the game, I never heard any. The game is quite addictive and the later screens really are difficult and this game still has a lot that is novel and interesting.***

2 After playing many a game of this classic on the 64 I was initially quite impressed with the similarity between the two versions. After a while I began to notice the certain little details lacking on the Amstrad conversion. Little touches like the excellent high score table and the animated birds flying the title letters onto the screen made the original version the classic game it was but with these, admittedly pointless, features the whole thing seems a bit lack lustre. Still, I'm sure many an Amstrad owner will enjoy *Bounty Bob* for its entertaining gameplay although it does seem a little bit overpriced at the ten pound mark.

3 *I found the characters a bit too blocky and the sound too 'buzzy' to be really endearing or 'exciting'. However, the game itself is one to make you work quite hard, especially in getting those pixel-perfect jumps off pat. Fortunately the control method of short and long jumps makes this possible with some practice. In general I wasn't bowled over by* Bounty Bob, *especially considering how much I would have to pay for it, but putting finances aside, it represents an interesting platformer that's well worth a look before shelling out or not*

Presentation 42%
Below average for a game of its price with few options and a blocky look.

Graphics 59%
Better colours should have been chosen and Bob's a bit too bold.

Sound 55%
Although the spot FX are quite good they tend to get a bit wearing.

Playability 74%
The game still has many inspired ideas so there's a lot to do.

Addictive qualities 73%
The 'what's around the corner' syndrome will keep you at it till the bitter end.

Value For Money 40%
Even on the Amstrad ten pounds is quite a lot, this would have been better priced at least a pound less.

Overall 62%
Doesn't quite live up to its reputation but it's still quite special.

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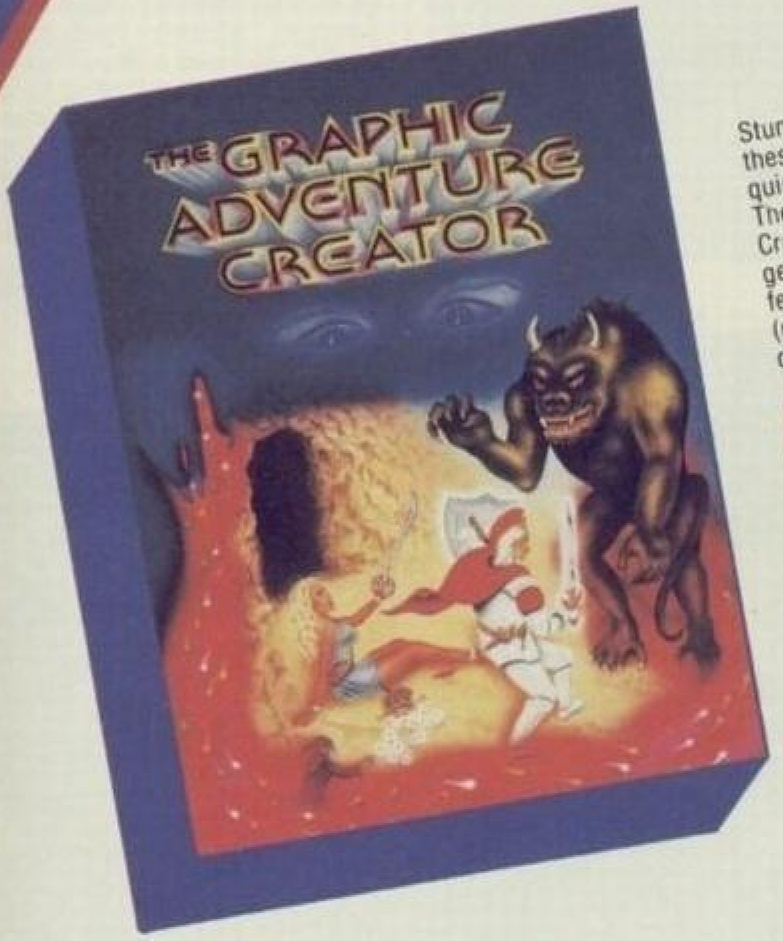

Stunning Graphics like these can be generated quickly and easily with The Graphic Adventure Creators built in picture generator. The many features include Line (using elastic banding), dot, circle, ellipse, fast fill, shading, step by step review, easy editing and progressive stop delete functions.

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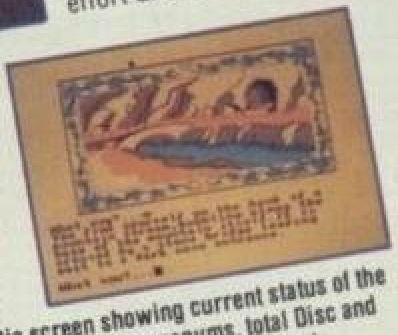

Other GAC features include space for up to 765 different verbs, nouns and adverbs, the ability for objects to have individual characteristics (weight/cost etc), alphabetical word scanning and sorting, a full diagnostic screen showing current status of the 255 markers plus 128 counters, the acceptance of synonyms, total Disc and Tape compatibility, high and low priority plus local conditions, separate printer menu etc etc.

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CAULDRON

Palace Software, £8.99 cass, joystick only
Author: Richard Leinfellner and Steve Brown

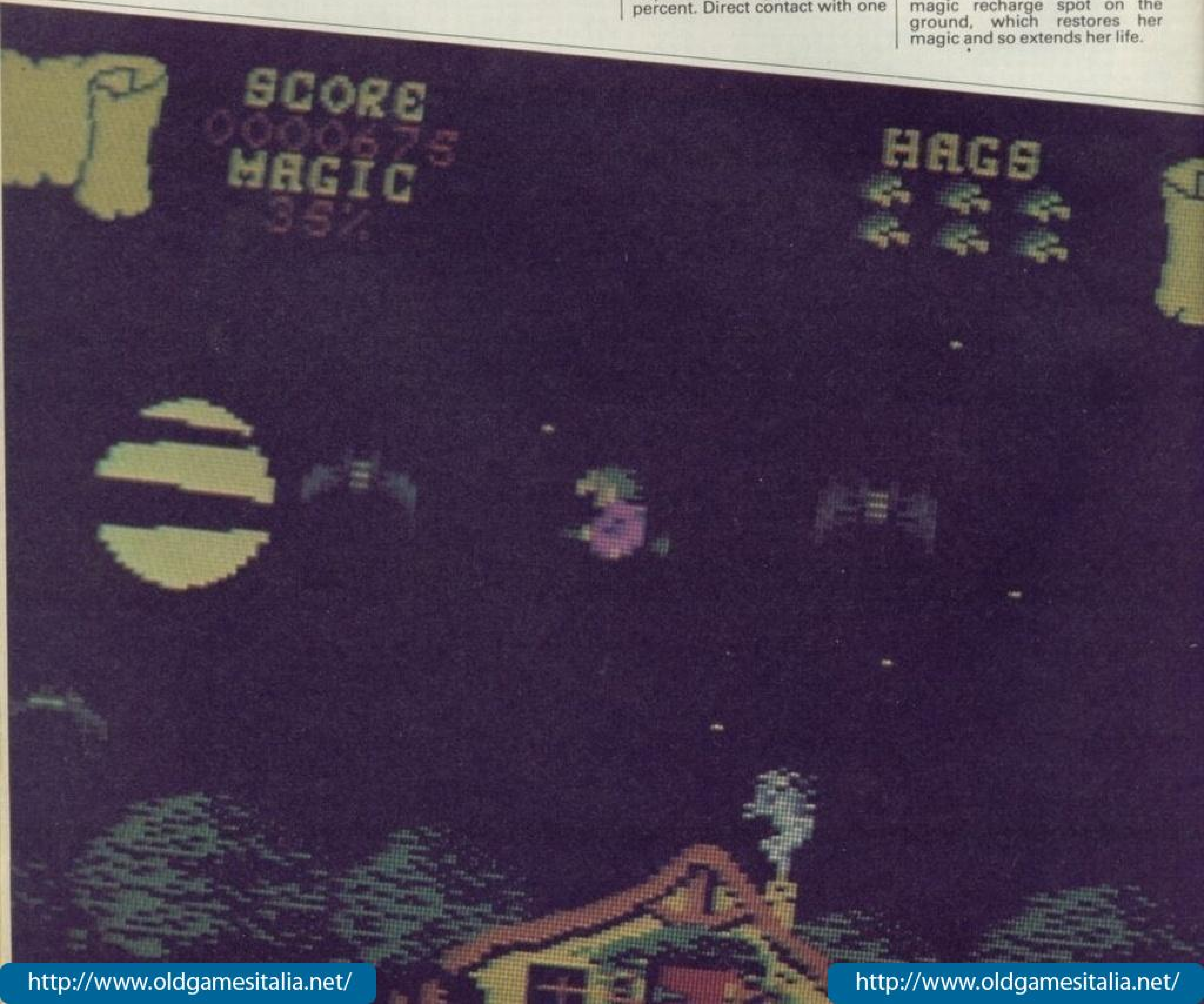
CAULDRON
Amstrad

Halloween is a witch's busy time, especially so for those witches who seek the position of Queen witch. It is written that The Queen Witch shall be she that possesses the Golden Broomstick. But such power does not befall the weak, it must be snatched from the lair of the pumpkin and to defeat the pumpkin a spell must be cast — a spell made from six ingredients.

Your task is to gather the ingredients and brew them up in the cauldron in your cottage. You know the sort of thing; juice of toad, eye of newt, wing of bat and so on. Each ingredient can be found deep within one of four caverns, access to which is barred by five locked doors. The Hag must mount her broom stick and set off in search of keys. Her journey will take her over many landscapes, each one with its own hazards. The woods are besieged with bats; the graveyard's groaning with ghosts; the sea's swimming with seagulls and the mountains and volcanoes threaten her with Hag-eating plants and singeing fireballs. Not friendly environments, but the Hag is not too concerned, so long as she is protected by her magic.

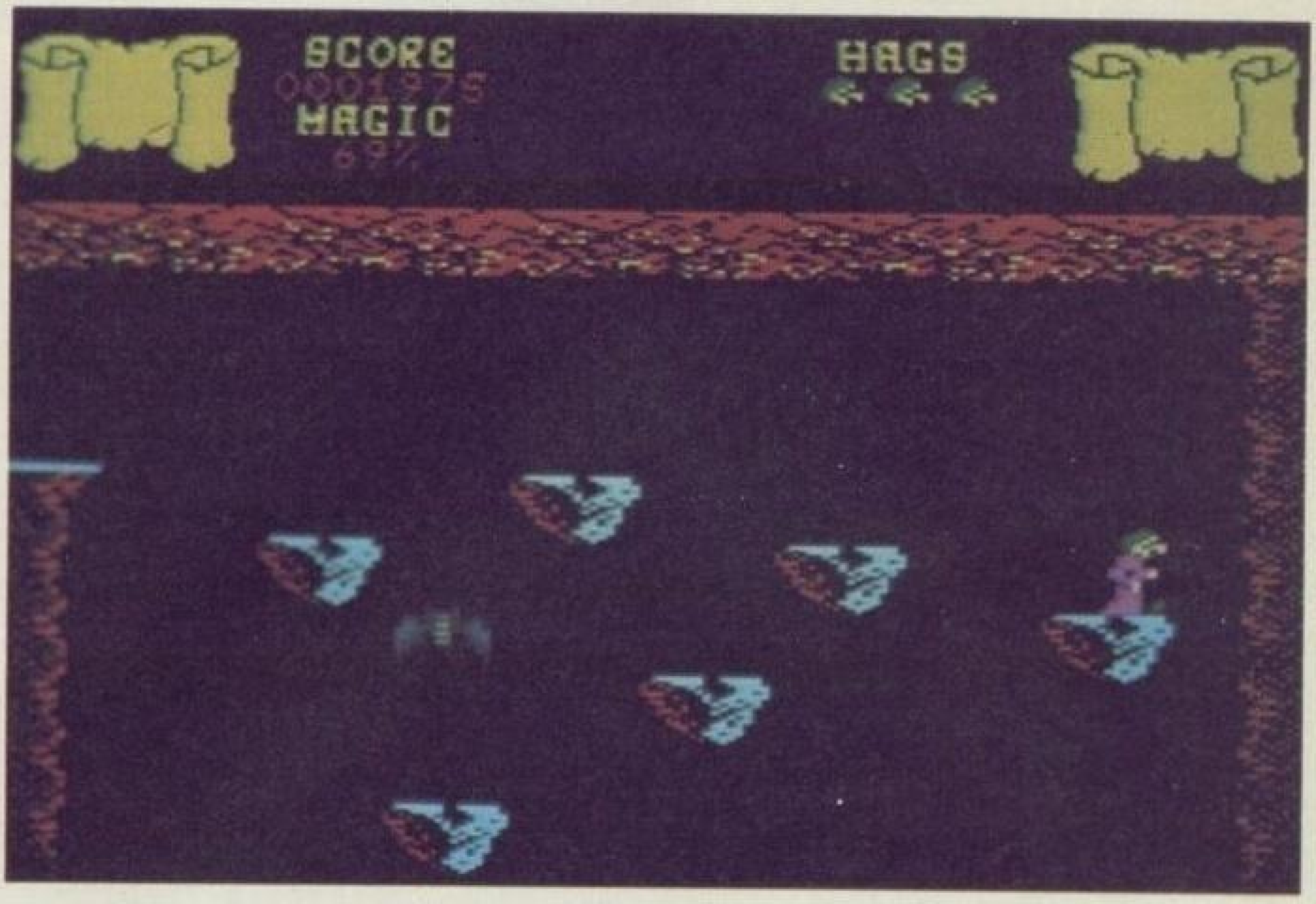
You begin the game with nine Hags, and they start their journey with a magic level of 99 percent. Direct contact with one of the hazards rapidly depletes a Hag's magic level until she is done for. The hag must avoid the nasties, or blast them with her magic spell, which turns her broomstick into a cannon and costs a little magic power.

The Hag must look out for the randomly located keys on the ground while she flies around the skies. When she spots a key, the Hag must find a safe place to land — often this means flying to another screen and walking back to collect a key. The Witch is at her most vulnerable while she is on hoof, as the shooting spell only works while she's astride her broomstick. If she's lucky, the Hag might find a magic recharge spot on the ground, which restores her magic and so extends her life.



She can only carry one key at a time and must make straight for a door, any door, once she's collected one. If a door opens when the Hag tries a key, then that key is lost to her. If she withdraws and allows the door to shut, the Hag will have to use another key to reopen it, and that could leave her short.

The layout of the caverns differs, but they all demand great skill in reaching the ingredient which, in some cases can be three or four gruelling screens away from the door. You will find yourself jumping from ledge to ledge while trying to avoid a host of nasties. Should you manage to collect an ingredient then it's out and back to the cottage to add it to the cauldron before continuing the hunt for the rest of the recipe.



CRITICISM

1 **I am very impressed by the graphics and animation in this game except in one small respect: when the Hag walks or flies past other objects such as trees or mountains she appears to suffer from attribute problems. A minor niggle, because the graphics, overall, are a joy. Some of the effects within the caves are very clever. In one of the caverns the rock ledges are shaded gently in red, giving the impression that there is a great glowing fire, far below. Flicking from screen to screen tends not to be as effective as scrolling — not in this case. It all happens so fast that one barely notices the change. One last point — this is a very hard game to play. It will take a great deal of skill and a lot of patience to complete.**

2 *Cauldron's* graphics are fantastic, among the best I have seen on the Amstrad. There are so many neat and clever touches, like the way the old girl's frock flaps as she falls, or the flashing eyes in the skull encountered in one of the caverns. My only complaint is that the game is very difficult, almost too difficult. The problems begin in the caverns which demand not so much the skill of an adventurer but more that of a suicidal arcade player with the will and determination to experiment. The means whereby you move from one screen to another can only be discovered by trial and error. I spent many hours concentrating on learning the route through just two caverns. The task is made more difficult by the way the game flips from one page to another. While you are on the edge of one screen you have no idea of what to expect on the next: should you jump or should you walk? Either way you are going to lose a lot of Hags finding out. *Cauldron* is a huge challenge but it is a varied one with graphics that make it endurable.

3 *Palace Software's* Cauldron *mixes the well-proven recipes of platform and shoot 'em up, and what is served to you is a game that gives a starter, main course and a sweet, yet leaves you hungry for more. The graphics move smoothly whilst flicking from page to page as you fly across the screens. Once you have gone underground things get more difficult. Having to leap your way up and down labyrinthine subterranean passages 'peeking' at where you want to land on the next screen at the cost of dashing one of your nine hags against something fatal, is a costly business. I'd have preferred scrolling screens. Even with this criticism,* Cauldron *merits much praise as a colourful, consuming and intelligent game that has converted well to the Amstrad.*

Presentation 64%
Very little in the way of instructions and keyboard play not provided for.

Graphics 95%
Remarkable animation made all the more effective by very clever use of colour.

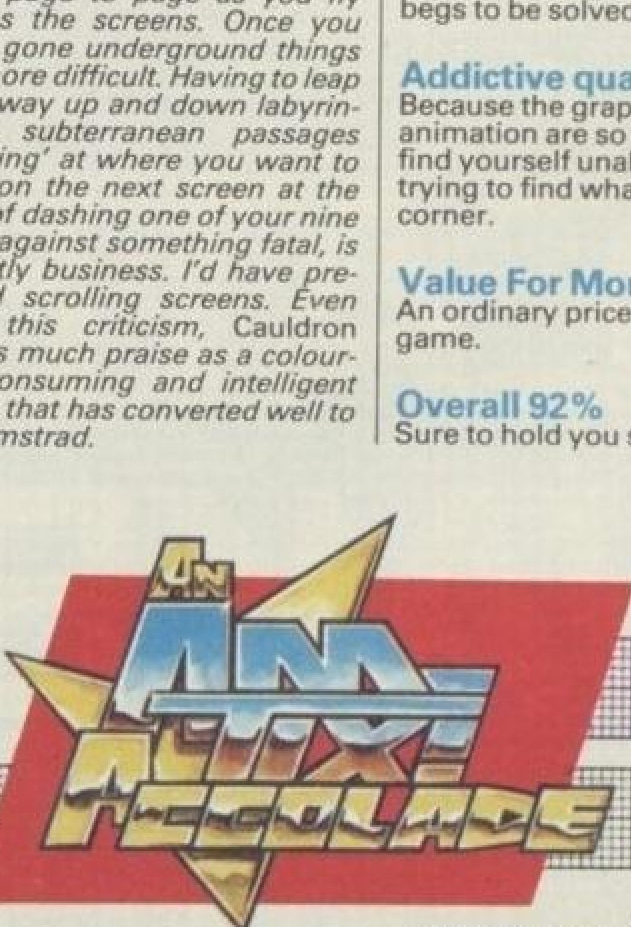
Sound 73%
While the tune at the start of the game was reasonable more sound would have been welcomed during the game.

Playability 92%
A demanding game which requires a range of skills and begs to be solved.

Addictive qualities 90%
Because the graphics and animation are so good you will find yourself unable to resist trying to find what's around the corner.

Value For Money 85%
An ordinary price for a magical game.

Overall 92%
Sure to hold you spellbound.



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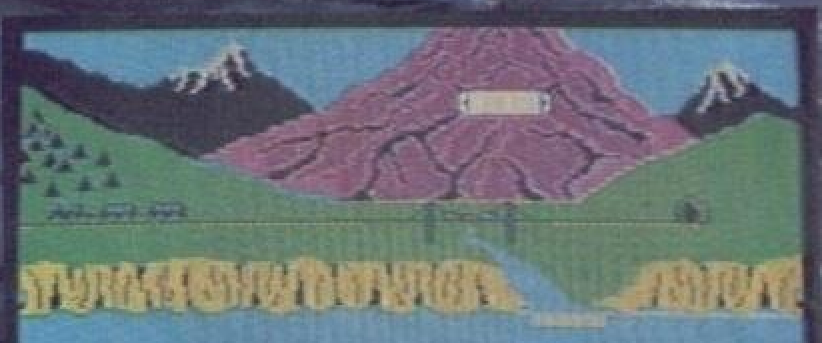

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FIGHTING WARRIOR

Melbourne House, £8.95 cass
Author: Studio B

Melbourne House have released their follow up to the highly successful *Way of the Exploding Fist* in the form of *Fighting Warrior*. Although this latest game continues the trend in combat games it differs from *Exploding Fist* in that *Fighting Warrior* follows a story.

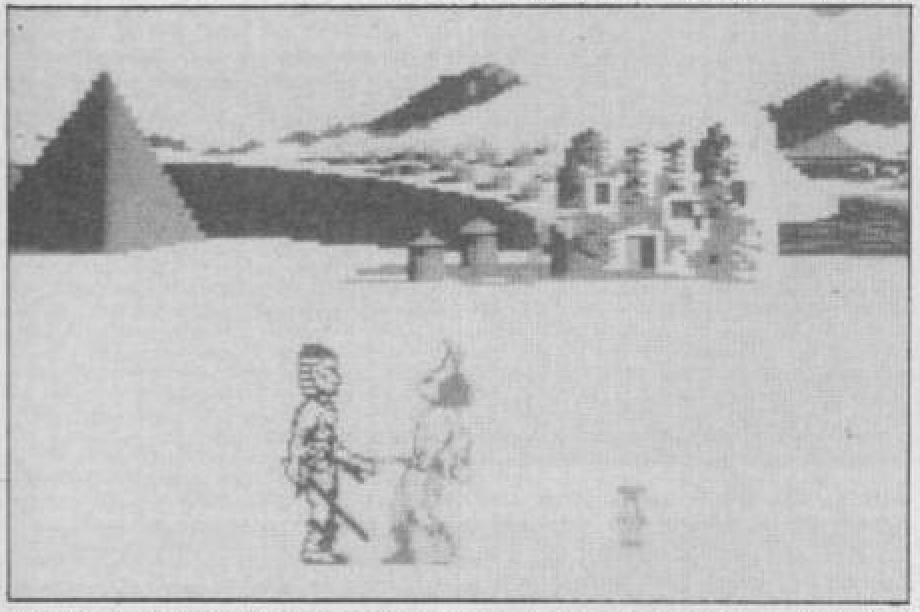
Set in ancient Egypt the story revolves around the two separated lovers. The hero's lover, Thaya, has been kidnapped by an evil Pharaoh who has locked her away in a remote temple. Understandably miffed at the Pharaoh's deed, the fighting warrior decides to set out and release his beloved from her prison. Armed only with a sword, our hero must face the hazards of the dessert which is plagued with mythological demons and demigods. These creatures are set upon defending their territory, proved by the bones of previous trespassers. Apart from their bones the desert beast's previous victims have also left behind a number of pot-like objects, rumoured to possess mystical powers. The pots may be activated by giving them a good whack with your sword, though it's not guaranteed the effect will beneficial.

A scrolling backdrop with the warrior and his opponent is displayed on screen. As the warrior progresses, the backdrop scrolls. Sooner or later our hero chances upon a foe with whom he must do battle. Both the foe and the warrior have a limited amount of energy. The energy is shown underneath the fighters as a row of chevrons. For each blow suffered, the victim loses a power point. Before long the energy reaches a critical point at which stage the losing fighter starts to flash spasmodically. If you lose all of your energy during a fight the game is lost.

When it comes to fighting there are three offensive strokes, top, mid and bottom strikes. Attacking moves require the fire button to be held down, with it released your warrior goes into defensive mode, used not only against your attacker but also against other dangers including stray arrows that come flying into view from off screen. A Douglas Fairbanks leap or just a plain old duck should be useful for arrow avoidance.

The different beasts to be fought vary quite a bit, but mostly they are humanoid with weird heads, equiped with the same type of sword as yourself and wielded in a similar manner. A nasty worth avoiding, if you can help it, is the great big dragon thing. Though unarmed he does a nasty line in body kicks, hitting back is not so easy as he defends himself by wrapping his wings around him. As expected the attackers get harder as the screens progress, different opponents using different tactics.

If the full set of warriors are vanquished then your last problem is a confrontation with the Pharaoh's wizards. If these are beaten the princess is free. Failure's only reward is death.



CRITICISM

1 **After Melbourne House's big hit with *The Way of the Exploding Fist*, it looks like they want to carry on the trend with yet another beat em up. Though a little bit prettier than *Exploding Fist*, *Fighting Warrior* just doesn't have the appeal of its predecessor. Though beautifully animated, the range of control you have over the warrior is rather limited. The game is quite easy as well, by just holding the fire button and pulling down I progressed quite a way. I'm afraid that despite the clever graphics and pleasant presentation *Fighting Warrior* just doesn't quite make the grade.**

2 When I saw the loading screen for *Fighting Warrior* I thought it was going to be mega-fantastic, and after loading the presentation was excellent. The backgrounds are really colourful with good use of colour modes and above average shading effects. After all this I was expecting a fabulous game — but alas no! The characters themselves are very similar to the Spectrum version but the gameplay is far too slow. The continuous tune all the way through the game is very annoying and the sound effects on hitting a bloke sounds like someone has digitised the sound of a squashed tomato and stuck that in. When you hit an opponent two character blocks of red and black pixels appear on the place of impact, which is very amateur coming from Melbourne House. *Fighting Warrior* turns out to be inferior compared to its Big Daddy *Fist* and a lot less exciting.

3 *I knew it would never be easy to follow* Exploding Fist *but I had expected something a little more dramatic in the fighting department. Instead we are presented with a story line offering more in the way of gameplay. The task is to rescue the Princess and indeed one can have quite an enjoyable time trying. The settings are very attractive and the variation in characters is most welcome.*

But the bottom line is that this is a fighting game and the fighting is its greatest failure. The action is too restricted and movement too slow. The compromise is between having a complex game like Fist *or a more absorbing, entertaining game, but with simpler fight sequences.* Fighting Warrior *may hold your attention for a little longer.*

Presentation 80%
Boasts quite a few options and an attractive loading screen.

Graphics 85%
Very impressive featuring realistic movement if a bit slow.

Sound 72%
Well executed tune but with sound effects.

Playability 68%
Maybe too easily mastered but bound to give you a hard time.

Addictive qualities 63%
The variation in background and character helps but the action can become repetitive.

Value for money 62%
Average price for a slightly above average game.

Overall 74%
An unworthy successor to Fist *but may still provide some entertainment.*

MATCH POINT

Psion, £7.95 cass.
Author: D and L Research

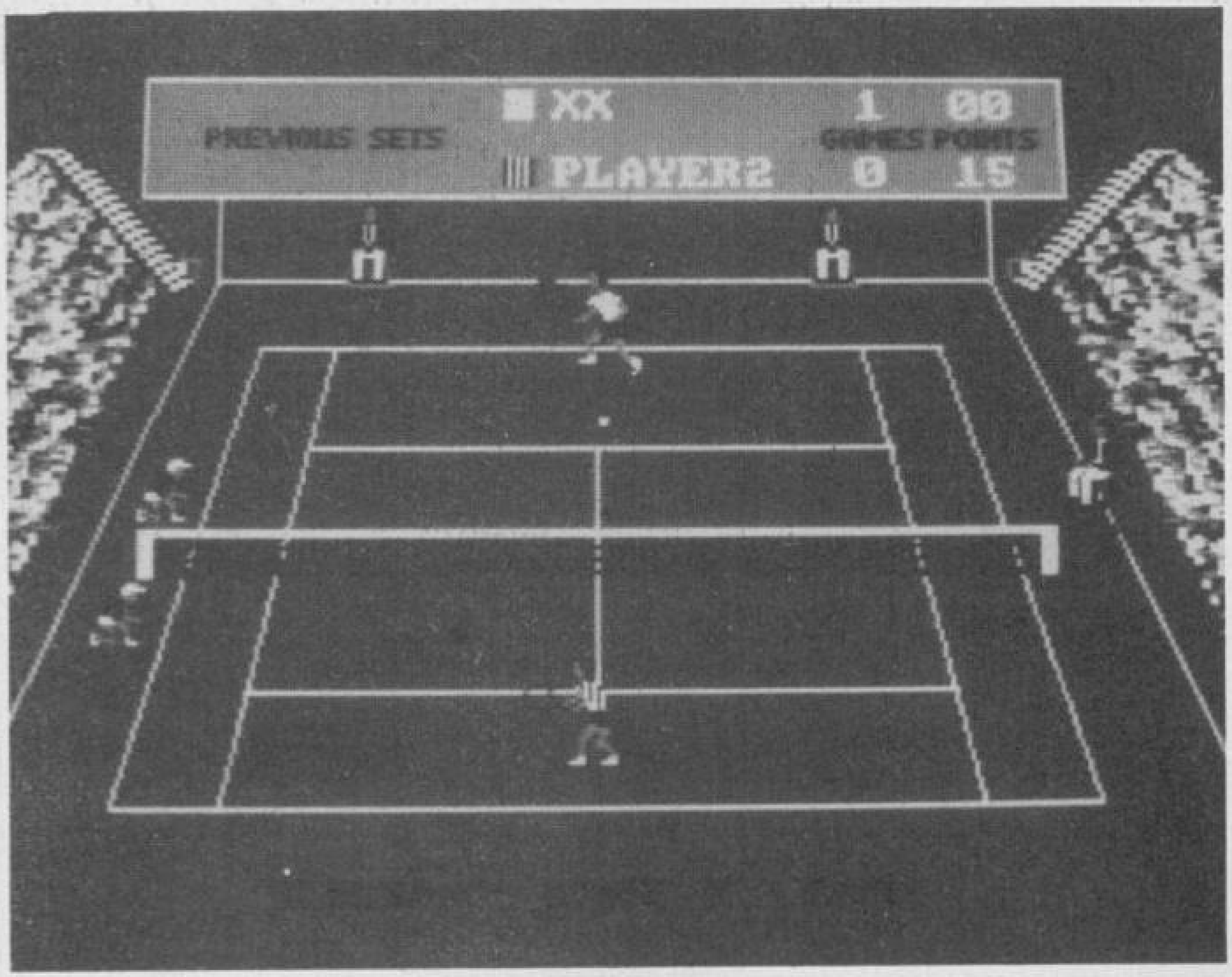
Psion are normally associated with chess programs and the QL computer, but they have produced a wide range of Spectrum games, one of the best known of which is *Match Point*, their tennis simulation.

The grass is green, the net is taut and the ball boys are ready for the off. The players sign on. Either one man against Straddles or man versus man. You can start in the semi-finals or leap straight into the big match itself, if you are up to it. *Match Point* observes the same rules as those used for lawn tennis and just in case you aren't familiar with them, a brief synopsis has been included with the game instructions.

Hitting a ball gently to and fro over the net would be a very tame way to play tennis. The object is to hit the ball in such a way that your opponent is unable to return it to your side of the court — in this, it is just like real tennis! To achieve this the player must be allowed a reasonable degree of influence over the speed and direction of a shot. The *Match Point* tennis player alters the speed of the shot by adjusting the speed at which he moves into the ball. The direction of the shot depends at which point on the arc of the racquet's swing the ball is struck.

Although *Match Point allows you to change from backhand to forehand at will, the switch can be made automatically by the program, at the appropriate time. The positioning of the players for the serve is also automatic, pressing fire serves the ball. If a ball is 'out' or a 'foul' is called then a beep sounds and a message appears at the bottom of the screen announcing the umpire's decision. When a ball collides with the net then, true to life, one of the ball boys dashes out and picks it up.*

At the at the far end of the court, the end furthest away from Harry Carpenter, sits the score board. As each point is scored the board is updated, Wimbledon style. At the end of a game or set the crowd, who aren't in the least partisan, cheer as the players sprint over to the umpire's high chair. No words are spoken. Not one racquet is thrown. The players about turn



PSION
match point
for the Amstrad CPC 464-664-6128

and continue the match.

Apart from the ability to select two player mode or one player against Straddles, you can ask for a demonstration game at any one of the three levels. It's very much like watching a real tennis match. The only thing missing is the commentary, but you could always provide your own.

CRITICISM

1 **Tennis is not an easy game to simulate, it's very hard to capture the 'feel' of the game. But I am very impressed with *Match Point*. The characters are well defined and very well animated. The different options give the game a lot of flexibility, the most inexperienced will cope with the semi-finals while the finals are very challenging indeed. The movement of the ball is excellent, I particularly enjoyed the way it re-bounds off the net. The only thing that annoyed me was the wretched bleeping whenever the ball was out, I had to turn the volume off in the end and rely on messages at the bottom of the screen. If you fancy yourself as a tennis thug then get this.**

2 I have a tendency to steer away from sports games but I really enjoyed playing this. Firstly it's great fun just to set it up into demo mode and watch. An ideal way to enjoy out of season tennis especially if you have a couple of friends cheering the two players on. As a game to play it offers hours of challenging fun. I like the the way the computer makes the occasional mistake. I thought the way the little players dashed off court and straight back again at the end of a game was a little bit silly. Also it would have been a lot better if you were able to control the serve.

3 *Match Point* on the Spectrum is still one of my favourite games and when Big Jem gave me my Amstrad version I quickly hurried off and loaded it up. On loading I was presented with some great graphics with a little bald umpire looking over the proceedings. The characters appeared on screen, one adorned in a blue striped shirt. On playing the game I soon realised that the great graphics and neat touches made up for the average gameplay compared with the realistic Speccy version. Although compared to any other Amstrad ball-sport simulation it's fantastic and would beat *Centre Court* any day. If you're a bit of a tennis fanatic then I would certainly recommend this 'cos it's better and a pound cheaper than Amsoft's effort.

Presentation 84%
Options for keyboard or joystick as well as three levels of play and lots of nice touches.

Graphics 82%
The choice of colours and design of the characters makes for an attractive game.

Sound 60%
Nice crowd sounds but annoying bleeps.

Playability 78%
Great fun to play despite a few unrealistic control problems.

Addictive qualities 77%
Gives a nice impression of the skills you really don't have!

Value For Money 83%
A well designed game for a good price.

Overall 79%
A mighty match for many a maybe McEnroe.

ASSAULT ON PORT STANLEY

Amsoft, £8.95 cass
Author: Edgar Belka

Assault on Port Stanley is a three-stage shoot em up set, with somewhat dubious taste perhaps, around the Falklands capital. The game begins with the words 'Approaching enemy fleet' and before you know it — there on the horizon is an enemy ship.

During this initial stage twin guns mounted on your ships' bow are your only weapons — you can just see the bow peeking into the lower part of the screen. As the enemy ships approach open fire. Gun elevation is fixed, so you cannot adjust the range but you can move the entire ship left and right though not forwards or backwards. Enemy ships must be dead ahead of your position to be destroyed by hitting them three times, bagging you 200 points for each one. It's all very well lobbing shells at the enemy but you must be reasonable and expect them to send a few back. Your guns have a slightly longer range than theirs. This means that you will be able to get at least one 'free' shot off before they return fire. The enemy gunners are pretty good, they rarely miss and every hit destroys a sizeable percentage of your ship. The only way to avoid the enemy shells is to keep out of range, difficult when you are among the enemy fleet with five or six ships breathing down your propeller shafts.

At any stage during the naval engagement you can launch a helicopter, thus entering the second stage of the game. The object is to reach an island but you can only fly as far as fuel supply allows. The fuel imposes a bit of a problem — the sooner you leave the ship the sooner you can stop being blown up by the enemy, but if you leave too soon then you could end up falling out of the sky as your engine splutters through lack of fuel.

Once airborne you must steer the chopper left and right — Space Invader style — to avoid the onslaught of enemy aircraft and their missiles. You can shoot back and every enemy plane downed gains you 50 points.

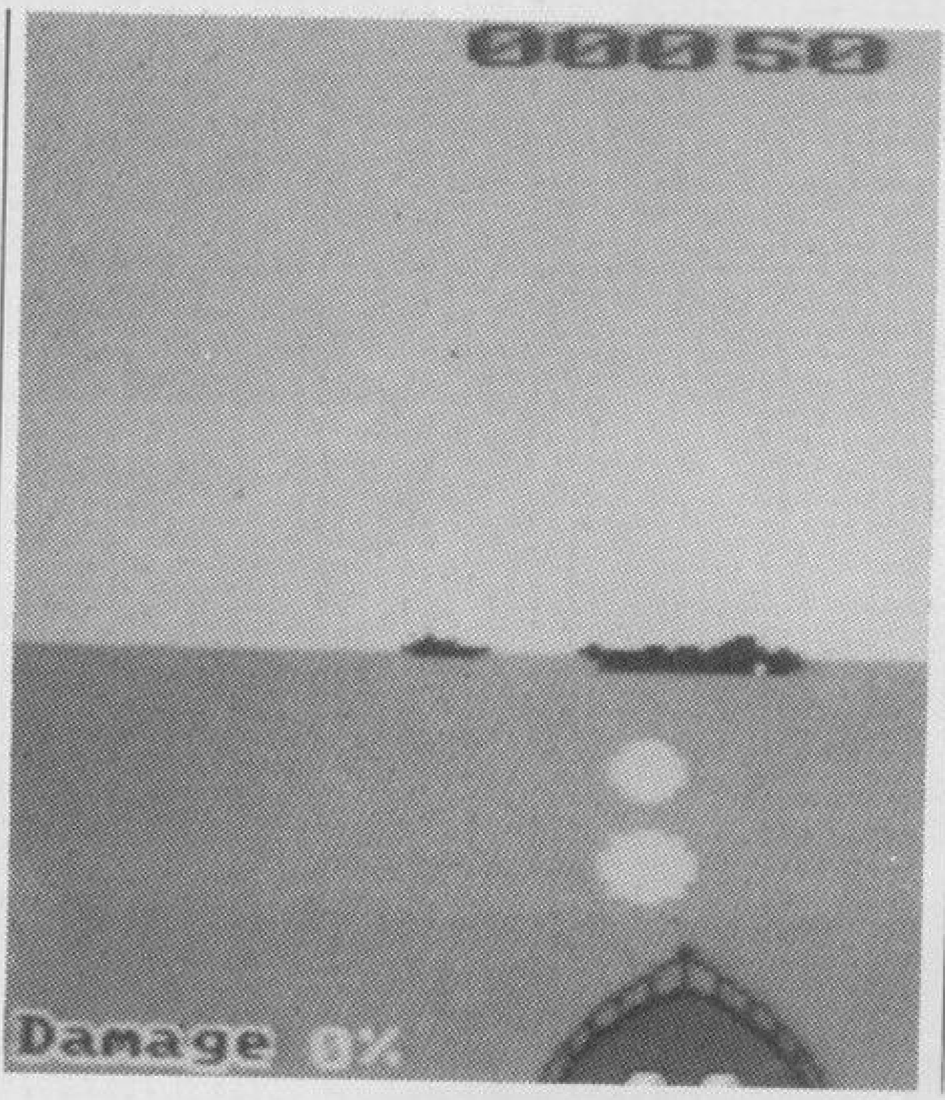
If you survive the enemy aircraft and your fuel holds out then you enter the channel, the last stage of the game. At this point you must attack enemy ships and barrage balloons while flying down a narrow river channel. If you collide with the cliffs or any enemy craft your helicopter will be destroyed. You are still suffering from the fuel problem but in this stage it's possible to re-fuel. Along the water's edge there are some huts together with a landing stage to which you guide the helicopter, land and collect some men. If you manage to reach the end of the channel you are awarded bonus points for every man collected.

Control keys: joystick only

CRITICISM

1 **I spent my time waiting for the first enemy ship to come into range wondering just what it is that links this game with the Falklands war. I concluded that the only link was war itself. After all there was no ship to ship engagement in that conflict, helicopters were not used systematically to shoot down the Argentinian air force and finally the British did not use helicopters to knock out Argentinian ships held up in a narrow channel protected by barrage balloons. What a stupid title. After playing the game I soon realised that the only way this game could be marketed was by giving it a slightly controversial name, it's worked before so why not now? The game itself is utter rubbish. Why can't you control the range of your guns, to make it a little more interesting? How is it that the only way of moving out of the range of the Argentinian guns is by moving left or right until you can't see the ship any more. That suggests that the Argentinians were as stupid as the Bug Blatter Beast of Trall, who could be evaded if one covered ones eyes on the principle that the beast thought that if you couldn't see it, then it couldn't see you. Also, I didn't know that the Argentinians flew bi-planes, because that's what the silly aircraft on the second stage look like.**

2 If *Raid On Port Stanley* took a war to inspire it then it could be excused as being written under fire. The game is to computing what Hitler was to diplomacy. I can only say that the title is a product of marketing. I'm surprised they haven't included a high score competition along the lines of 'Kill an Argie-Win a Metro'! Having to run a blockade of ships as you approach the island is the best of the screens, but don't run out and buy a tin hat yet! The only way to avoid enemy shelling is to keep the ships off your screen, a case of out of sights, out of range. A similar method is adopted for the Argentinian planes which harass you as you near the island. You cannot fire against them, so you avoid damage by outrunning them. With ships that fast it's a wonder the enemy don't just surrender at the start of the game. It's a pity they don't and save you the trouble of ploughing through the rest of it. I personally will hoist the white flag now and just say the game is not worth the memory it's used, and certainly cannot justify the price tag of £8.95



3 *The Falklands war involved a lot of state of the art war hardware so it's disappointing to find that the game reflects nothing of this. The game itself is pretty dire, the planes sent out by the enemy to harass you, are probably the best piece of animation you'll see during the game. Once you are bored enough you can launch your helicopter and take to the skies, where you have a much earned screen change. Enemy planes scroll down from the top of the screen in monotonous formation and fire rather randomly at nothing in particular. Once past the planes you enter the channel. This is populated with barrage balloons that move backwards and forwards and yet more ships. You can fire at both of them but beware of the ships as you may collide with them — in a helicopter! The whole game is completely insipid and I think in poor taste, I will sign any treaty if I don't have to play this again*

ASSAULT ON PORT STANLEY

Presentation 20%
There are no key options and the very definition of a dull loading screen.

Graphics 17%
Only two elements are any good, the helicopter exploding and the aircraft in part 1.

Sound 35%
The helicopter and shell effects are not bad but become tedious.

Playability 32%
Just kill anything that moves but near impossible to avoid being hit by the enemy ships.

Addictive qualities 10%
You are bound to stick at it if only to discover if the end is as bad as the start.

Value For Money 12%
A ridiculous price for a game that wouldn't rate as budget software.

Overall 12%
No comment.

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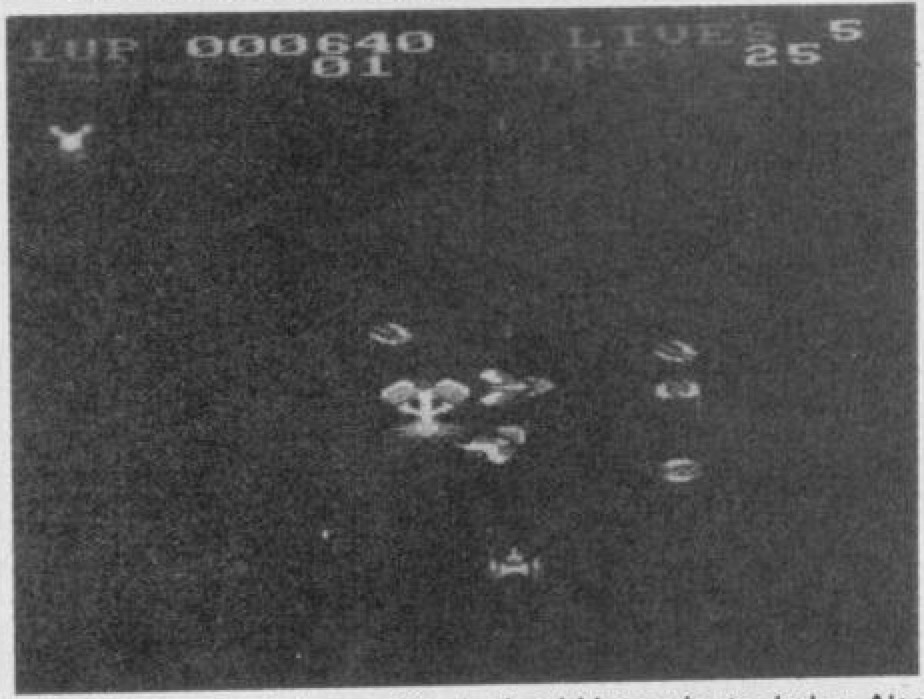
Star Firebirds is a version of an obscure arcade game doing the rounds a few years ago. As you may expect it has a similar scenario to arcade games of that period. You go left, right and fire. Actually the game in question originally appeared when game designers where starting to add original features to the old classic, ie a warp button.

If you're interested in the scenario it runs as follows. You have travelled to the outer reaches of the cosmos to do battle with the legendary Firebirds. The Firebirds aren't very nice at all and are intent on the destruction of all the human species.



Since you're the nearest member of the human race around, they start on you. The birds attack in waves of fifty, comprising mainly eagles and gulls. Also prone to drop down on you are some large bombs. Their shrapnel, should they reach the bottom of the screen, is likely to blow the ship to smithereens. Using the laser cannon, the bomb can be blasted while it's still high up and then resulting shrapnel from the explosion should be easier to dodge. Also making an occasional appearances are the Emperor Birds which, because of their imperial shielding, have to be blasted many times before they finally give up and die.

If your ship gets into a tight area and it looks like curtains for certain, then breathing gently on the space bar should put the ship into warp making it invulnerable to any attack. Warp also activates the booster rockets and propels you up the screen. Still able to move left and right it's possible to use the ship as a ram by bashing into the attacking Firebirds and, as you can still fire as well, a fair bit of destruction is possible when using warp. If you don't use the it then it's possible that the engines will fire by itself due to the energy build up in the crystals.

The ship cannon is (state-of-the-art stuff) is a 'quadruple photon cannon', which actually means you can have four shots in the air at any one time.

Control keys: Q/A left,right, left square bracket for fire and space for warp.

CRITICISM

1 **I'd really thought that the time of this game had passed, even for a relatively new machine like the Amstrad. It really is very dull indeed. Why Insight have decide to convert this from the Spectrum I don't know. The graphics, scenario and feel of the game are so ancient. There is some limited neanderthal appeal but not £7.95 worth. Insight should concentrate on converting their excellent *Vectron* to work on the Amstrad but *Firebirds* is well worth steering clear of.**

2 After seeing the Spectrum version I was looking forward to a great transalation on the Amstrad but unfortunately it is just not up to the same standard. Bugs were found in quite a few places such as when you die you can fire for a few micro-seconds after you've been hit — but to compensate for this you may be killed by aliens that are a few pixels away from you. The sound is well up to the Amstrad standard and gives some very painful splats when you kill something. The colour and sound are fine, but the gameplay is not good enough.

3 *I am afraid that this game has turned out to be something of a disappointment to me. I had expected some really smart graphics doing their bit at great speed. Not so. The programmers have opted for maximum colour with the result that the aliens are big and very chunky. Gaudy even. As far as the gameplay is concerned I think there are a lot of people who would enjoy such a fast action shoot em up so it's really is saddening that the graphics don't contribute to the game's playability. On the plus side I thought the sound had been effected very well, though that's little compensation for a generally dull game.*

insight
PRESENT
STAR FIREBIRDS
insight

Presentation 43%
Big easy to read letters but there's an awkward menu system that has to be accessed every time you play.

Graphics 49%
Colour, chunky and messy. The movement isn't too hot either.

Sound 58%
Parps and peeps as appropriate but nothing stunning.

Playability 55%
Instantly playable because of its simplicity but not much fun.

Addictive qualities 39%
Despite slight initial appeal it's easy to get tired of the constant repetition of action.

Value for money 21%
Even as a budget game Firebirds would not have been well received but at eight quid it just isn't worth it.

Overall 32%
There's a slim chance someone out there may like it, but it's a very slim chance indeed.

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BRUCE LEE

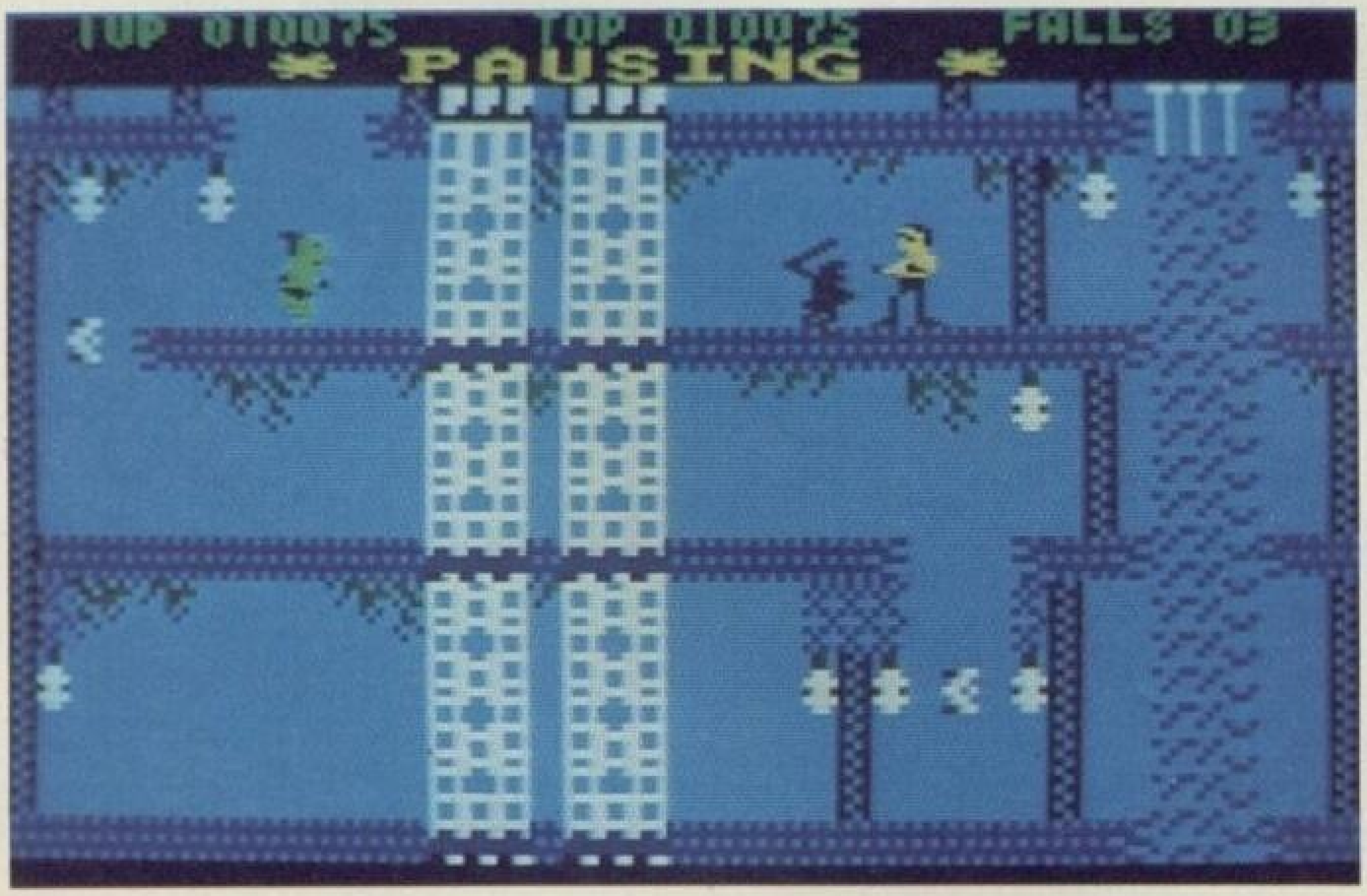
US Gold, £9.95 cass
Author: Timedata Ltd

BRUCE LEE
U.S. GOLD
Datasoft

Bruce Lee is, as you might well expect, a game starring the Martial Art Master — Bruce Lee. Playing the part of the world's most filmed fighting man, you have to guide Bruce to fame, fortune and eternal life. The trouble is, the guy who possesses all this infinite wealth and the secret of immortality is a powerful wizard. Naturally, the wizard is loathe to let anyone steal his prized possessions, which he has stashed away in his large mansion. Being a security conscious chap he's instructed his many minions to attack and kill any intruders found lurking within the many roomed fortress.

There are two different types of attacker employed by the wizard. Most deadly of the two is the green Yamo, a porky green assailant looking like a fat version of The Hulk in a loincloth. The Yamo will take three midriff kicks before he gives up. A couple of kicks or a well placed punch should fell the other nasty you'll meet, the black clad Ninja. Wielding a bokken stick, the Ninja is slightly easier to knock out than his fat friend. Also placed to hinder your way are a set of locked doors that can only be unlocked by collecting a number of lanterns. Natural hazards and obstacles are also fairly prolific throughout the mansion. Electric charges zap between various portals and your passage through them must be skillfully timed. Exploding t'sung li and the deadly pan lights should be avoided unless there's a suicidal streak in you.

Go off the edge of the screen and the next one flicks into view. Bruce is represented onscreen and is controllable from joystick or keys. Apart from the fighting moves, Bruce's repertoire of movements include running, jumping and climbing. Climbing comes in handy for quick escapes via the large number of vines growing around the mansion. When it comes to a fight our hero is well equipped with a powerful drop kick and a chin shattering punch. Bruce is a fairly tough character — he can take four or five biffings from either the Yamo or the Ninja before taking a fall, and he can take five falls before expiring and causing you to start a new game.

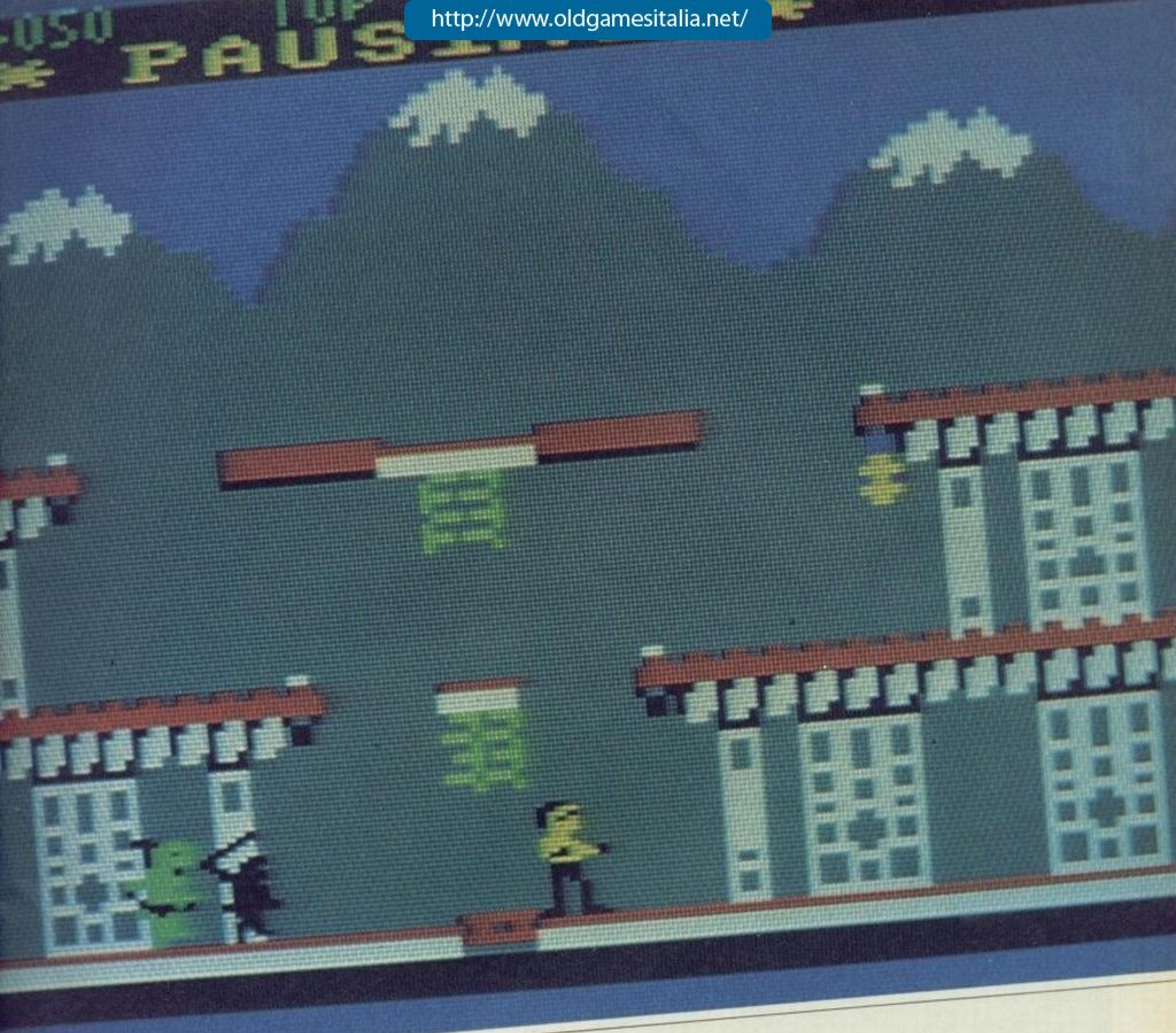


The game commences outside the wizard's lair and to get in, Bruce has to collect the lanterns placed throughout the adjacent screens of the gardens. Once this is achieved, a small door slides back on the first screen and you're into the wizard's castle. There are nineteen screens, each usually containing some sort of obstacle to be passed. Once you've completed all there is to complete, the Wizard appears and a short battle to the death takes place. Win this, and wealth and eternal life is yours. Ahhh, what a nice ending.

Control keys: Joystick.

CRITICISM

Understandably a bit wary after US Gold's previous conversions, I didn't expect great things from the *Bruce Lee* conversion. Luckily my preconceptions were totally unfounded and I'd rate *Bruce Lee* as one of the best games on the Amstrad to date. The graphics, though of a simple style, are very effective and near identical to the Commo-



dore version. As with other implementations of this game, its main appeal is the superlative playability. This game is a real favourite for me and I hope it is does as well as it deserves.

2 There are other games available, with more screens — and that could give you the impression that you're getting a lot for your money. However, *Bruce Lee* possesses a quality rarely found in this type of game. It has style, atmosphere and superb playability. Some of the chambers are wonderfully designed and the graphics are really original. I first saw this game on a rival machine and became instantly addicted. This version is the hardest I've encountered to date and I imagine spending many more all night playing sessions on the game. Don't hang around — just buy it.

3 Bruce Lee *is my personal favourite on another machine. Now it's come to the Amstrad I'm well impressed. Graphically the game isn't anything special but what's there is adequate and effective. It's also very close to the original and at first glance the game could easily be mistaken as being a Commodore one. The sound is on a par with the graphics there's an authentic title screen tune and some appropriate spot effects. Thankfully the game is more fun to play than to watch and wouldn't look amiss in any self respecting Amstrad owner's software library.*

Presentation 83%
Great two player mode and neat title screen and generally above average.

Graphics 88%
Though a bit blocky, the use of colour and movement is exceptional.

Sound 79%
A bit sparse but what I did hear was good.

Playability 94%
The simple but imaginative gameplay makes for a good buy.

Addictive qualities 95%
Even once solved you still find yourself reaching for another game.

Value for money 89%
A bit dear at nearly £10, but generally worth the extra expense.

Overall 93%
Should appeal to most gamesters everywhere. Definitely deserves to be a hit.

AN AMTIX! ACCOLADE

GEOFF CAPES STRONG MAN

Martech, £8.95 cass

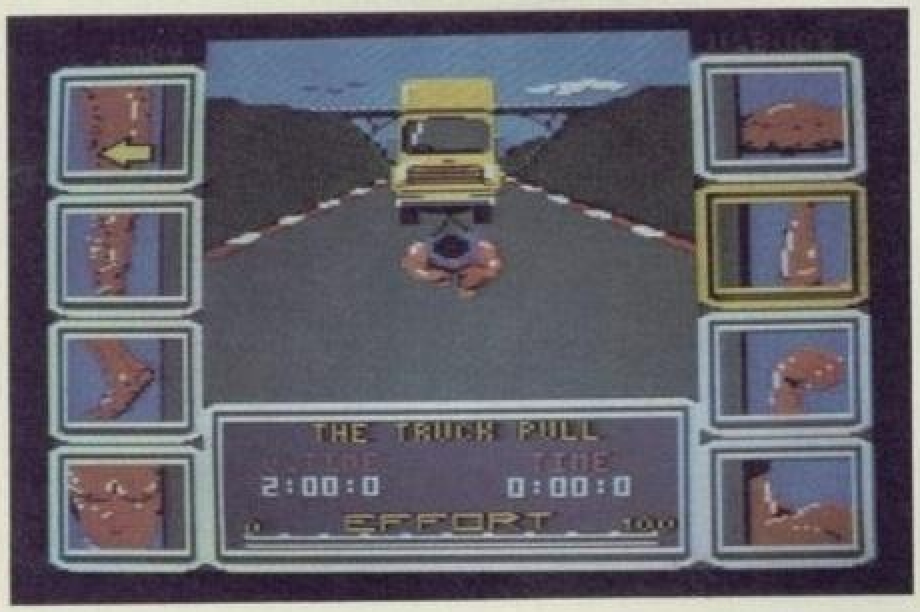
Unlike some sports simulations *Geoff Capes Strong Man* requires more than mere joystick waggling. The game begins with a training session, the outcome of which governs your performance for the six events. The task for this session is to build Geoff's strength up as much as you can. At the bottom of the screen you see an empty bar graph. You have to waggle the joystick like crazy for a few seconds to get the red bar as far up the scale as possible. You can wimp out, and accept the default strength, but it's not that macho.

Every event begins with a rest period, when you share out the strength you have built up. The energy shown on the main bar-graph can be allocated to the eight body parts represented by icons around the edge of the screen. Moving the arrow over an icon, you hold down fire until the desired amount of energy has been transferred onto the smaller bar graph contained within the icon. Repeat this process until all parts of the body are awarded some strength.

During an event, the rate at which a muscle's energy reserve is depleted depends on the level of effort you selected at the start and how often that particular part of the body is used during the task. Care has to be taken in allocating strength reserves, for if any part of the body is called upon during an event and found to have no strength, then Geoff collapses exhausted and you have to begin the game afresh.

During an event, the action is viewed on a the central area of the screen, around which eight icons are grouped. The most novel feature of this game is the way in which joystick waggling has been replaced with 'icon chasing', making it much more than a 'how much punishment can you give your joystick' game. The Z and X keys are used at the start of each event to move a horizontal bar up and down on a scale from 0 to 100, indicating the effort Geoff is to put into the task in hand. The more effort Geoff puts into an event, the more rapidly he can complete it, and the more difficult it is for you!

During the Lorry Pull, Barrel Loading and Car Roll events, the eight muscle icons around the screen flash indicating the order in which the muscles are called upon as Geoff gets going. You must follow the order of the flashing icons by moving a yellow arrow over each icon in the sequence and pressing fire. If you manage to follow the order, then the icon you selected flashes green. If you select an icon out of sequence then it flashes red. If you fall too far behind the sequence, Geoff grinds to a halt — and if you mess up totally, you can wait until all the icons flash red, indicating that the sequence is about to start again. The speed at which the icons flash yellow depends on the amount of effort you have selected — at 100 percent you daren't blink. You are competing against the clock in all three events.



The Log Chop requires you to press the fire button with split second timing. An Axe moves to and fro across the screen, above a log. When fire is pressed it descends and chops a lump out of the wood. Sections of softwood take one chop to cut through, hardwood needs two chops and knots, toughest of all, three chops. The aim is to select an easy section of log to attack, so you can cut through within the time limit.

Barrel Loading uses both joystick waggling and icon chase. Geoff must load five barrels onto a truck within the time allowed. Waggling the joystick moves him over to the barrel and makes him pick it up. From here on, chase the icons until he reaches the truck, then press fire at the right moment and Geoff lobs the barrel into the truck. Then it's back across the screen to collect the next barrel . . .

The Fairground Bell relies on a sustained period of waggling, until all of the muscle icons flash red indicating that Geoff is ready. Hitting the fire button brings the hammer down with a vengeance. The quicker you are at hitting fire after the muscles have flashed red, the better Geoff does.

Sumo Wrestling is the last event, and the only event where Geoff is forced to take on another competitor, face to face. The winner is the person who pushes his opponent out of the ring within the qualifying time. Pressing the fire button at the right moment gain ground for Geoff: bad timing loses ground.

Although Geoff is awarded a score for the completion of each event, the aim is to complete all six. If he fails in any event, either because he was exhausted or because he failed to qualify, then a new game starts. Should Geoff emerge from the events victorious you can have another training session and begin again, but this time the events are harder to complete than the time before. If you want to keep measure of your muscle power, then remember to enter your name on the high score table.

CRITICISM

1 **The gameplay allowed Martech to use graphics that are suitable but could not be described as highly detailed and well animated. At first I found it very hard to get the hang of the controls and sometimes missed the simple but uninspired joystick waggle technique called for in other games. Nevertheless after some perseverance I managed to do quite well and found the game quite playable. This game definitely demands a little more skill and expertise than other simulations that I could mention. My only regret is that the designers didn't see fit to include an option which allowed you to practice each event before the real thing.**

2 I am not a great fan of sports simulations so I really didn't load this game with any great degree of enthusiasm. However after playing it for a while it seemed a shame to have to describe it as a sports game. The different events called for a wide range of skills, not just a fast hand but for some pretty nifty co-ordination to boot. This is quite a challenging game to complete and I am sure that it'll provide endless hours of frustrating fun.

GEOFF CAPES
STRONG MAN
AMSTRAD
martech

3 *It took me quite a while to get the hang of this game and I am still having problems. The variety of methods used to control the strong man make for a complicated task requiring quick reactions and some pretty nifty joystick work. At first the game appeared to be too slow and dull, and I suspect that that may hold true until you get the feel of it. When you achieve a certain level of competence I think you will be well rewarded with a demanding and interesting game.*

Control keys: Cursor

Presentation 64%
The key choice was a little restricted but most will use the joystick option

Graphics 79%
Attractive and interesting graphics but the log event is a little simplistic.

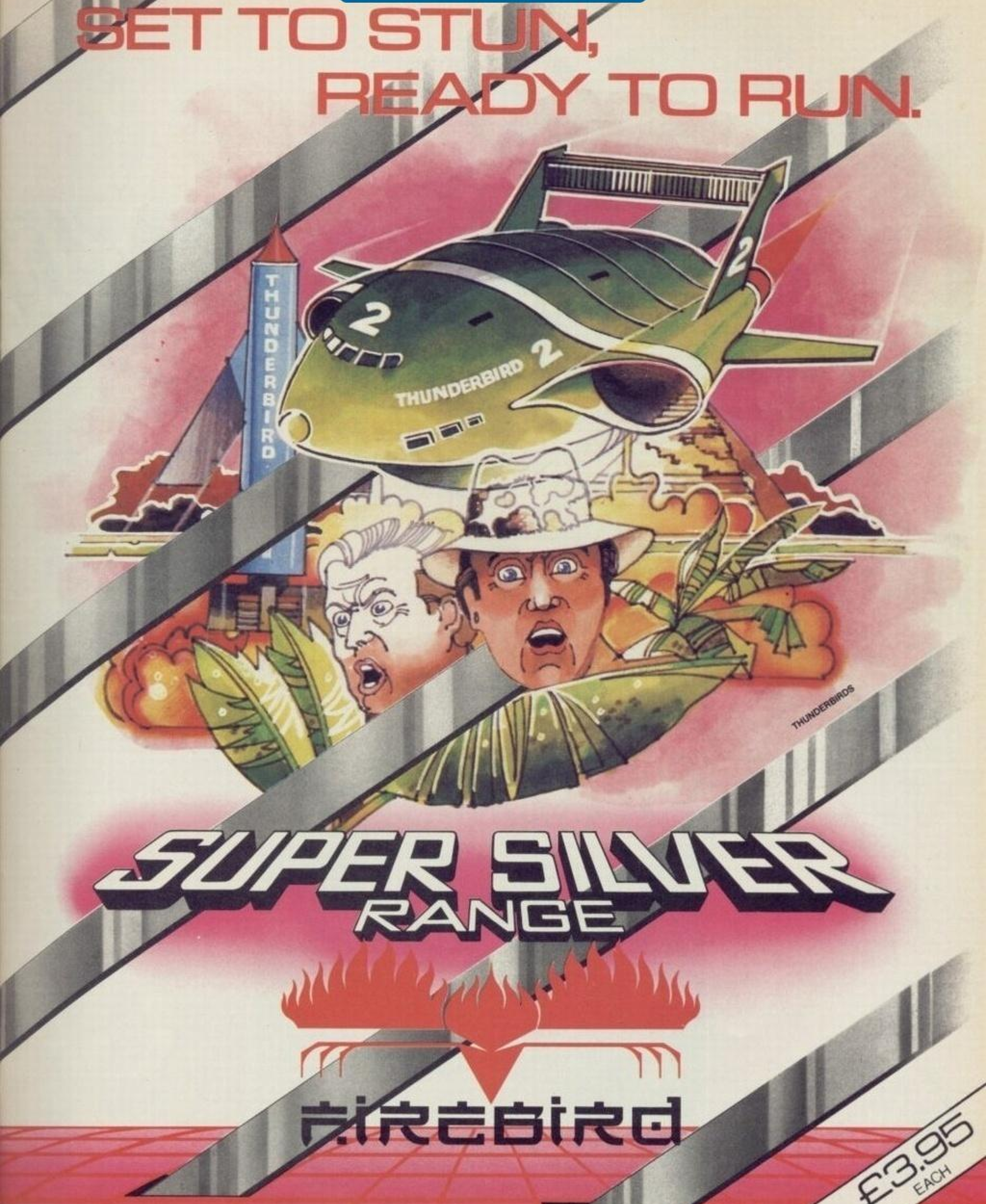
Sound 67%
Fairly sparse and the opening music prior to each event caused a needless delay.

Playability 83%
Once mastered this is a very enjoyable game.

Addictive qualities 78%
Sufficiently difficult to warrant your attention and you'll always go back to do just that little bit better.

Value For Money 75%
Above average content for the price.

Overall 85%
This scores for its original approach and interesting content. Good game, no sweat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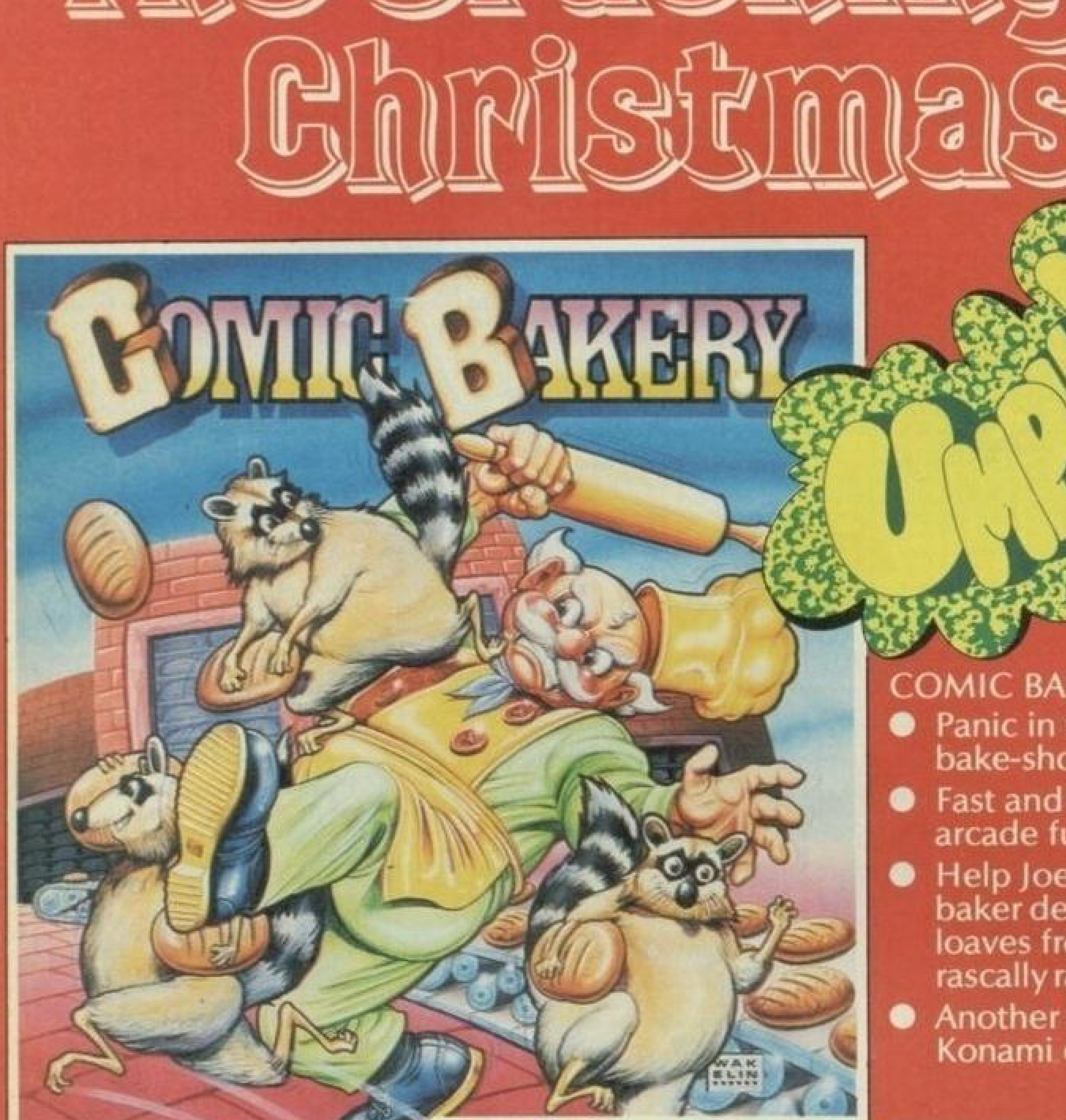

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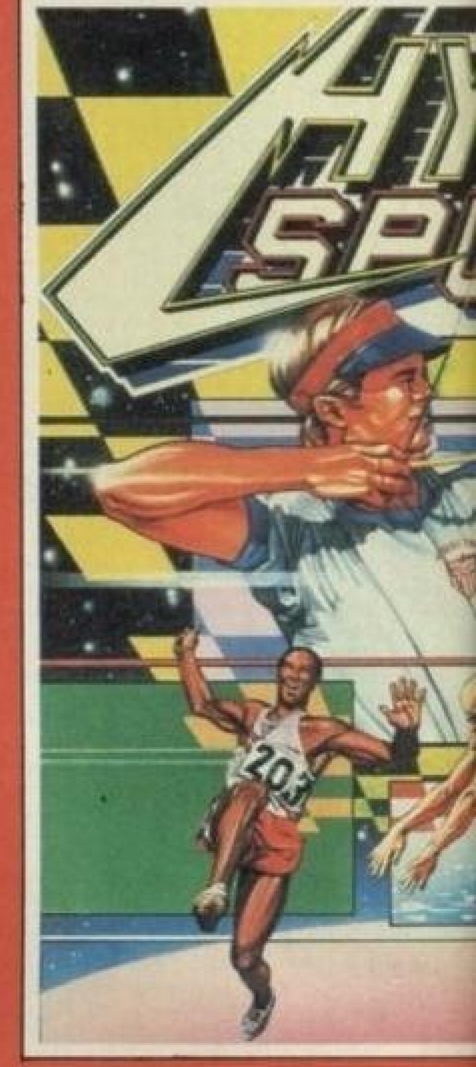

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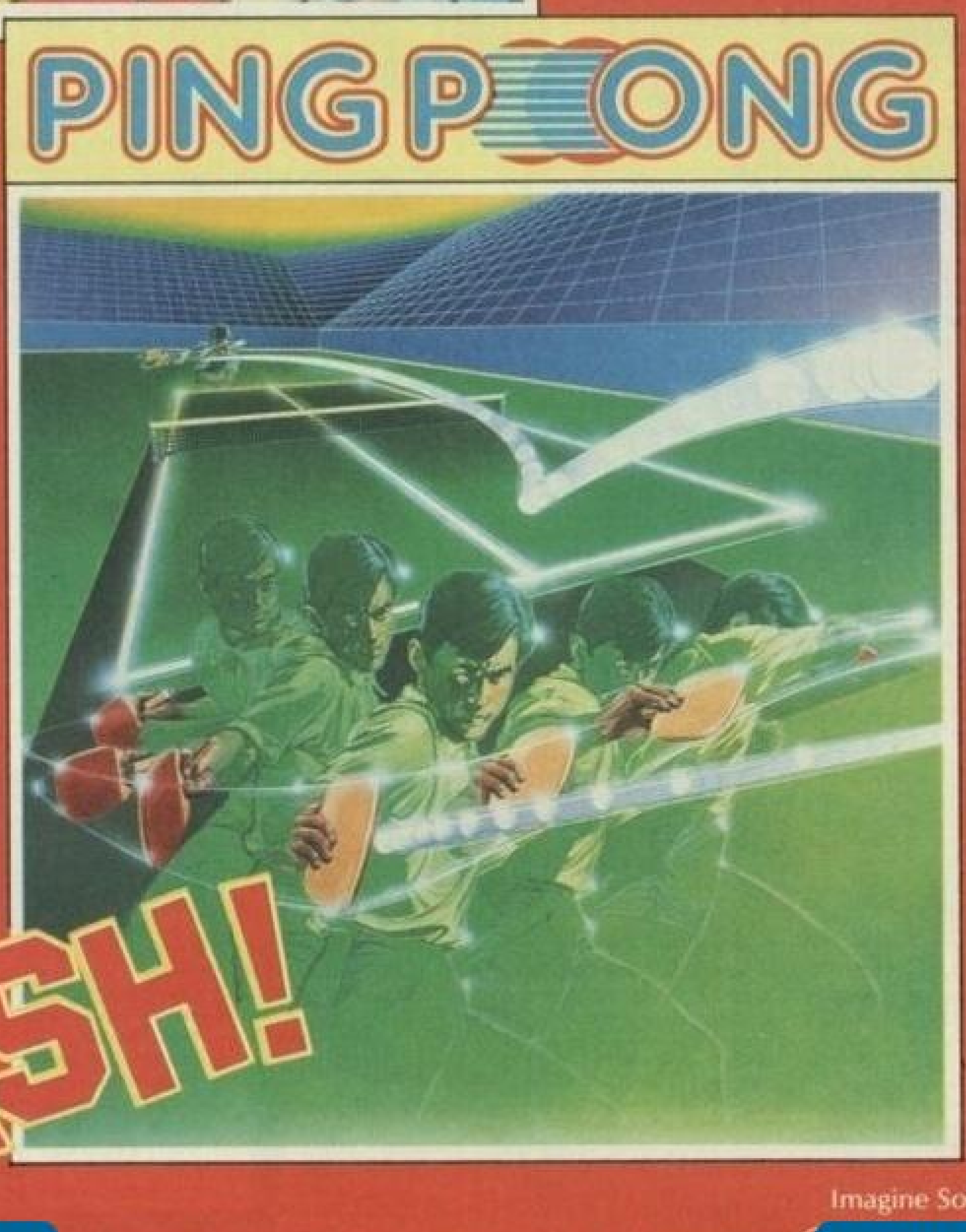

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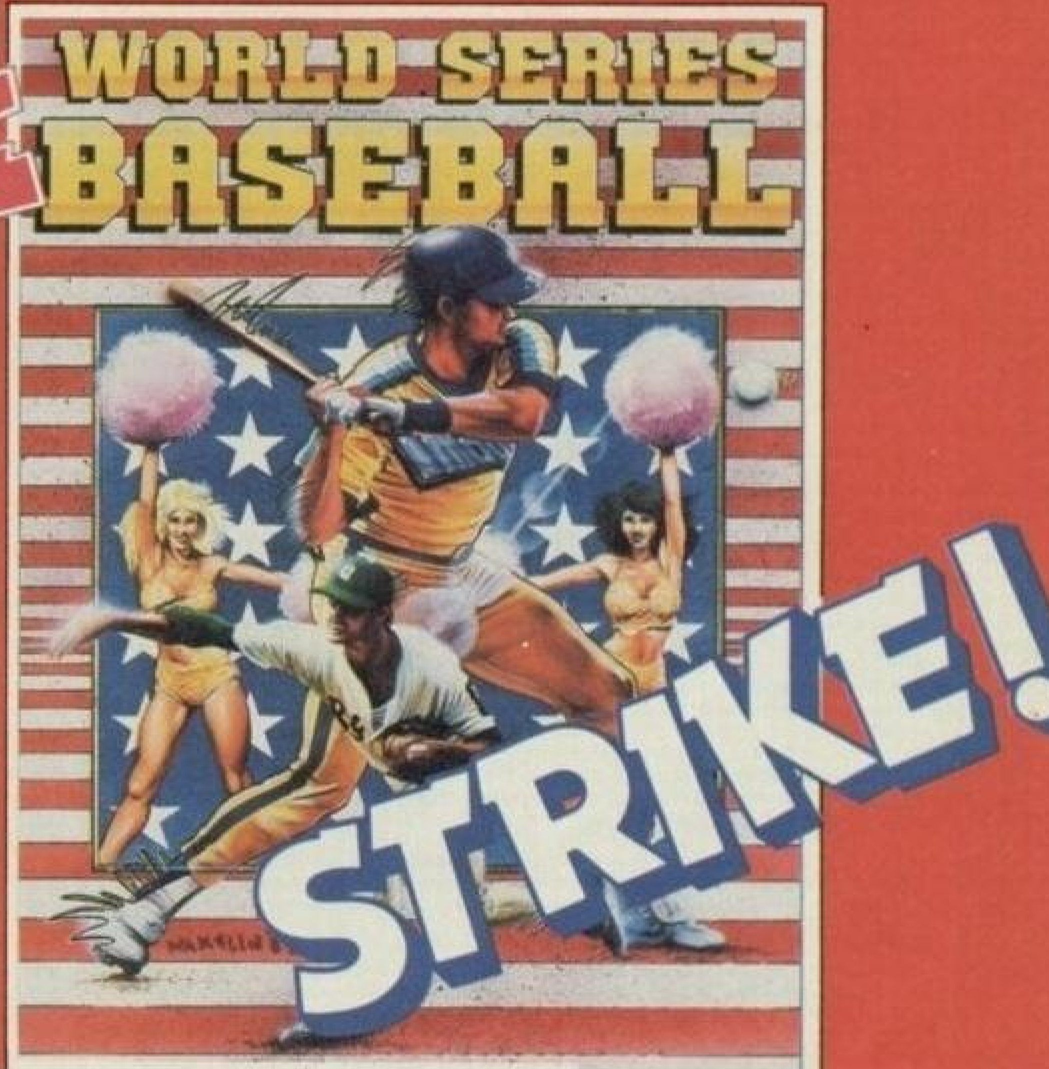

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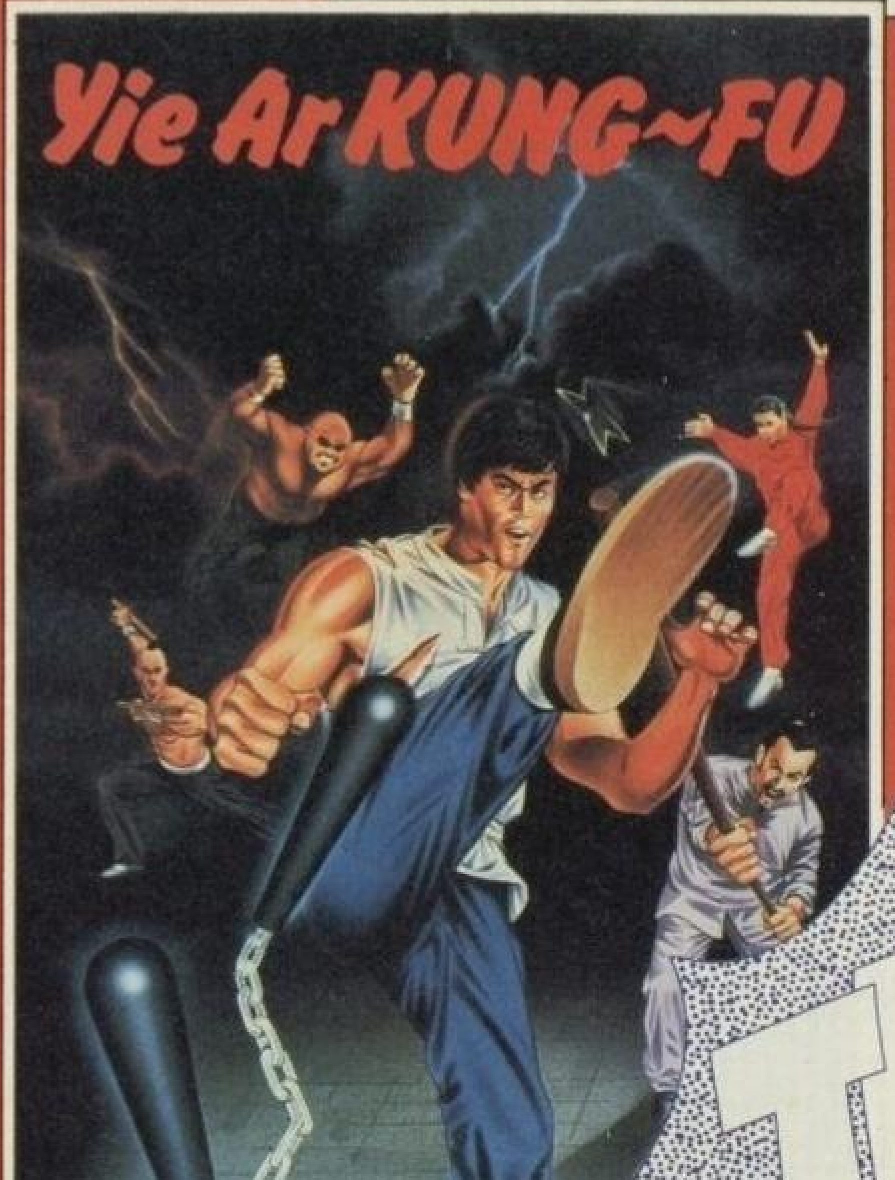

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SPY Vs SPY

Beyond, £9.95 cass
Author: Michael Fox

The fans of those evil, black and white espionage idiots, featured in MAD magazine, have been holding their breaths for the launch of this game. Apart from madcap skullduggery *Spy Vs Spy* introduces two techniques which make this game stand out from the crowd; **Simulvision** splits the screen in two. While the two spies are in separate rooms these are shown one above the other. If the spies occupy the same room then the bottom half of the display blanks leaving you to concentrate on the upper section. If you elect to play against another person instead of the computer's spy then **Simulplay** allows each player simultaneous and independent control of their respective spies.

The game is set within the confines of a foreign embassy. The two spies are battling to escape from the building but they both know that only the spy in possession of the secret briefcase, passport, money, key and plans has any hope of getting past the security guards. The one and only aircraft is set to leave as soon as the time limit has expired, so both spies are in danger of becoming long term guests of an unpleasant government.

Collecting objects is simply a matter of moving from room to room and searching under furniture and pictures. To search behind a picture move your spy over to the picture until you hear a blip and press fire. The picture moves and anything behind it is added to your inventory. The fire button also opens doors or picks up other non-secret objects a spy positioned in the appropriate place. It's wise to go for the briefcase first, because without it you can only carry one object at a time. If you wanted to select a trap or pick up a counter trap then the item you pick up disposes of the object originally carried (items of inventory are re-hidden within the room you occupy). If you don't have the briefcase then, the course of action open is to hide objects by moving them to safe places and hoping that when you discover the briefcase the other spy won't have nicked your hoard. The briefcase holds all four secret items but should you be killed or chance upon opponent then the case, with its contents, is hidden within the room of your demise, available for the enemy to search for and grab.

Since there is only one briefcase and one set of objects there is bound to be a degree of rivalry between the two spies. One spy can dispose of another either by beating him to death in hand to hand combat or by setting a lethal trap. In this game death is not permanent, the victim floats heavenward and stays out of the game for seven seconds of real time, losing 27 seconds from his game time in the process. While the victim is 'away' the victorious spy can continue with the search.

Hand to hand combat begins as soon as the spies share a room. By using the joystick you can wield a big stick in an attempt to do each other in. About seven well aimed thumps are required to send him on his way. A more refined method of despatch is via a device called a trapulator.

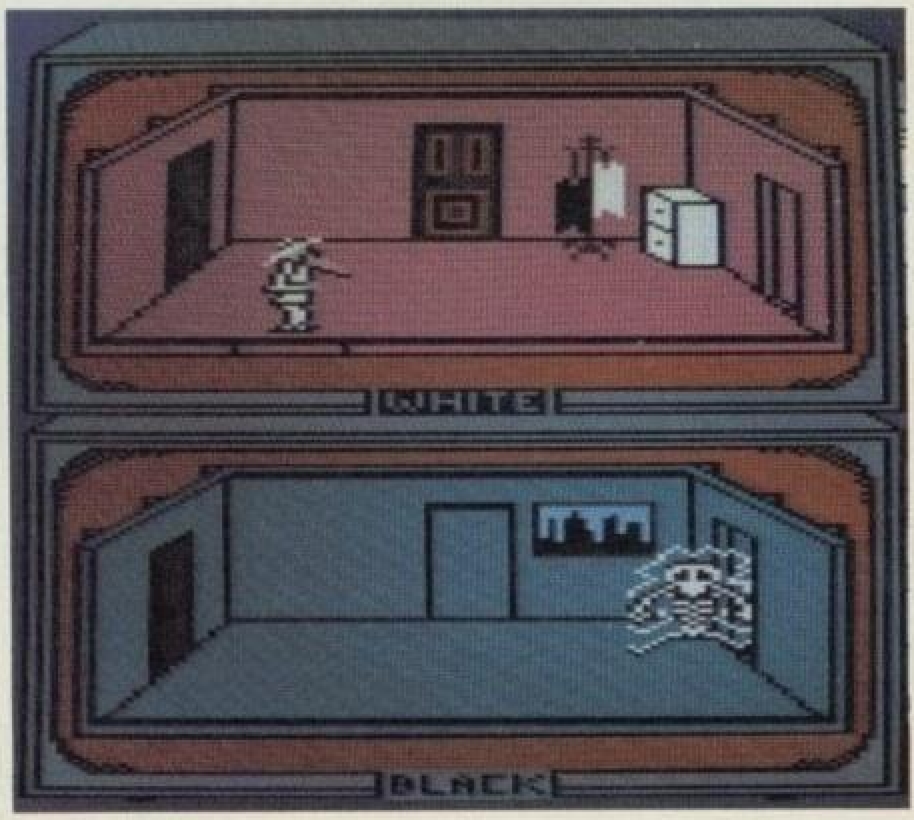
Each spy's trapulator is positioned alongside his screen. By using this device you can set five different types of trap, the sixth button is used to call up a map of the building to help you find your way about. Pressing fire twice activates the device with mode selection operated by centring a cursor over an icon. The only trap which can be set in any position is the time bomb, the others have to be set up in a particular way. These include buckets of water that must be positioned over a door; a spring that can be placed behind any object, except a door, as can the bomb; and a gun that must be placed and then the string tied to a door. The cost to a spy in setting a trap is time, often worthwhile for the chance of a good giggle when the other spy gets roasted, splattered or blown up. It would be wise to remember that once a trap is set it is just as much a danger to you as it is to your foe. All traps remain set until they go off or are disarmed.

All traps except the time bomb can be 'de-fused' by a counter device. An umbrella for instance, found in a coat rack, is useful as protection from the water bucket. A pair if scissors from the first aid cabinet takes care of the gun and string. A fire bucket can deal with the bomb while a pair of wire cutters come in handy if you have to get past the spring trap. The only way of knowing which trap you have to deal with is by watching your enemy when he sets it, and of course by not forgetting which room it was set in. When you are setting traps don't make life easy for the other guy, ensure that there isn't a remedy around the corner!

The option screen allows you to select the size of the building, up to 36 rooms with a time limit of 24 minutes. You can also select the intelligence of the enemy spy, 1 being pretty easy to defeat in combat and not very clever, 5 being very smart indeed. A large building means that there are a number of different levels, up ladders and through holes — in this case the map comes in very handy. It tells you which rooms you have been in which rooms contain any of the inventory items, but you lose time and points for using it.

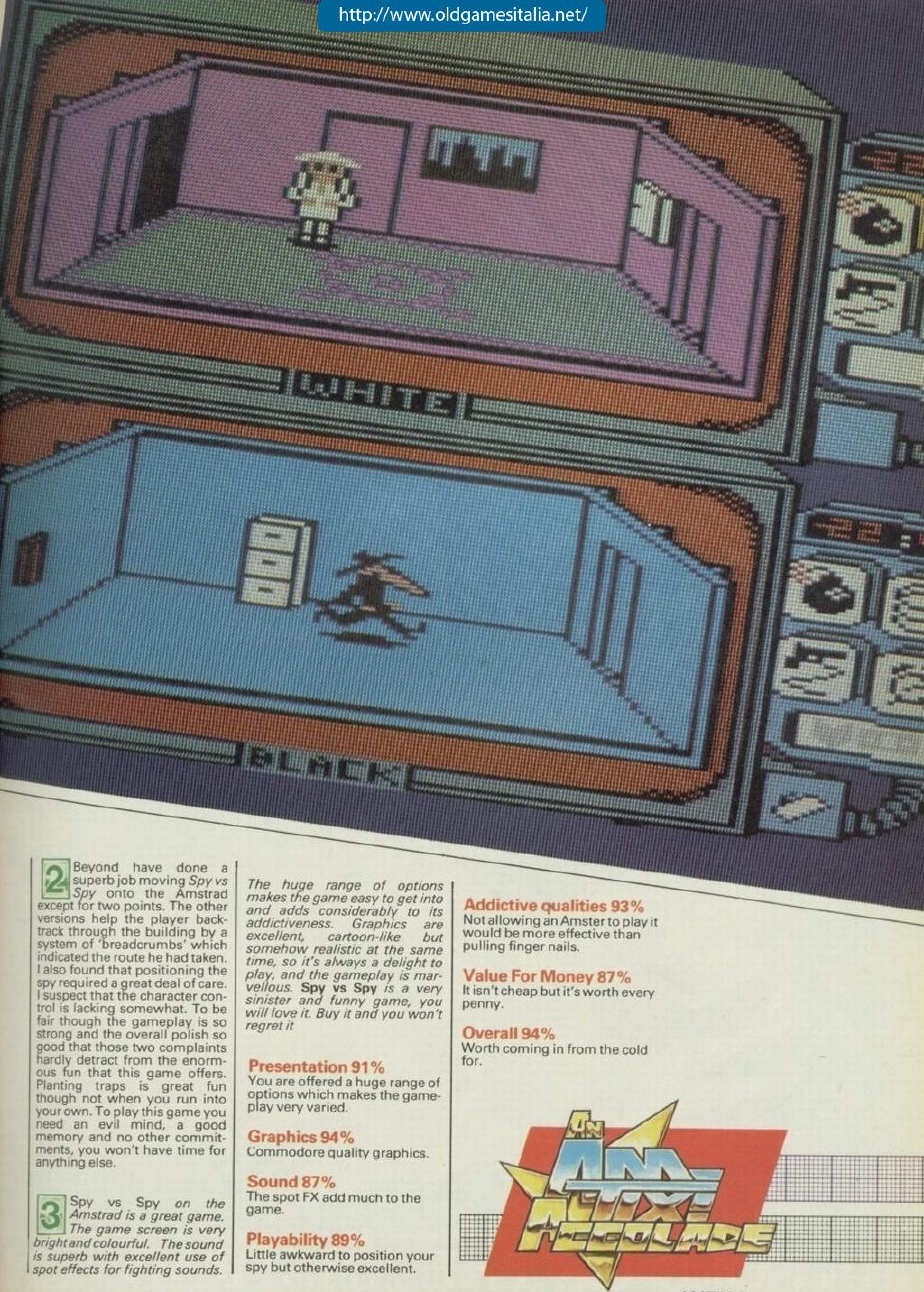
Once you are in possession of the briefcase with all four items inside, you can search for the door to the airfield. Once through, stop for a quick giggle and climb aboard your plane. The game ends with a rating which, more often than not is downright insulting, but that depends on just how sly a spy you are.

BEYOND
CHALLENGING SOFTWARE
SPY VS SPY
FIRST STAR



CRITICISM

***Spy vs Spy* is wonderful. The graphics are a credit to the Amstrad and look more like the Commodore version than the Spectrum. I should think that by now that the game play is legendary. The idea of two players being able to play the same game at once may not be revolutionary, but it is executed so well. This is a two player game to beat all two player games but even just playing against a computer spy is a great challenge. It's just as well you can keep an eye on what the spy is up to. Getting the hang of collecting the goodies takes a little time but once mastered you can set about exploring the huge and very deep strategy that the game offers. *Spy vs Spy* should keep you enthralled for a very long time indeed.**



2 Beyond have done a superb job moving *Spy vs Spy* onto the Amstrad except for two points. The other versions help the player backtrack through the building by a system of 'breadcrumbs' which indicated the route he had taken. I also found that positioning the spy required a great deal of care. I suspect that the character control is lacking somewhat. To be fair though the gameplay is so strong and the overall polish so good that those two complaints hardly detract from the enormous fun that this game offers. Planting traps is great fun though not when you run into your own. To play this game you need an evil mind, a good memory and no other commitments, you won't have time for anything else.

3 *Spy vs Spy on the Amstrad is a great game. The game screen is very bright and colourful. The sound is superb with excellent use of spot effects for fighting sounds. The huge range of options makes the game easy to get into and adds considerably to its addictiveness. Graphics are excellent, cartoon-like but somehow realistic at the same time, so it's always a delight to play, and the gameplay is marvellous.* **Spy vs Spy** *is a very sinister and funny game, you will love it. Buy it and you won't regret it*

Presentation 91%
You are offered a huge range of options which makes the gameplay very varied.

Graphics 94%
Commodore quality graphics.

Sound 87%
The spot FX add much to the game.

Playability 89%
Little awkward to position your spy but otherwise excellent.

Addictive qualities 93%
Not allowing an Amster to play it would be more effective than pulling finger nails.

Value For Money 87%
It isn't cheap but it's worth every penny.

Overall 94%
Worth coming in from the cold for.

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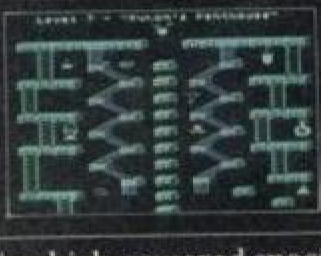

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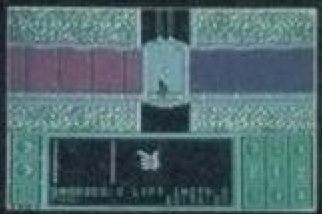

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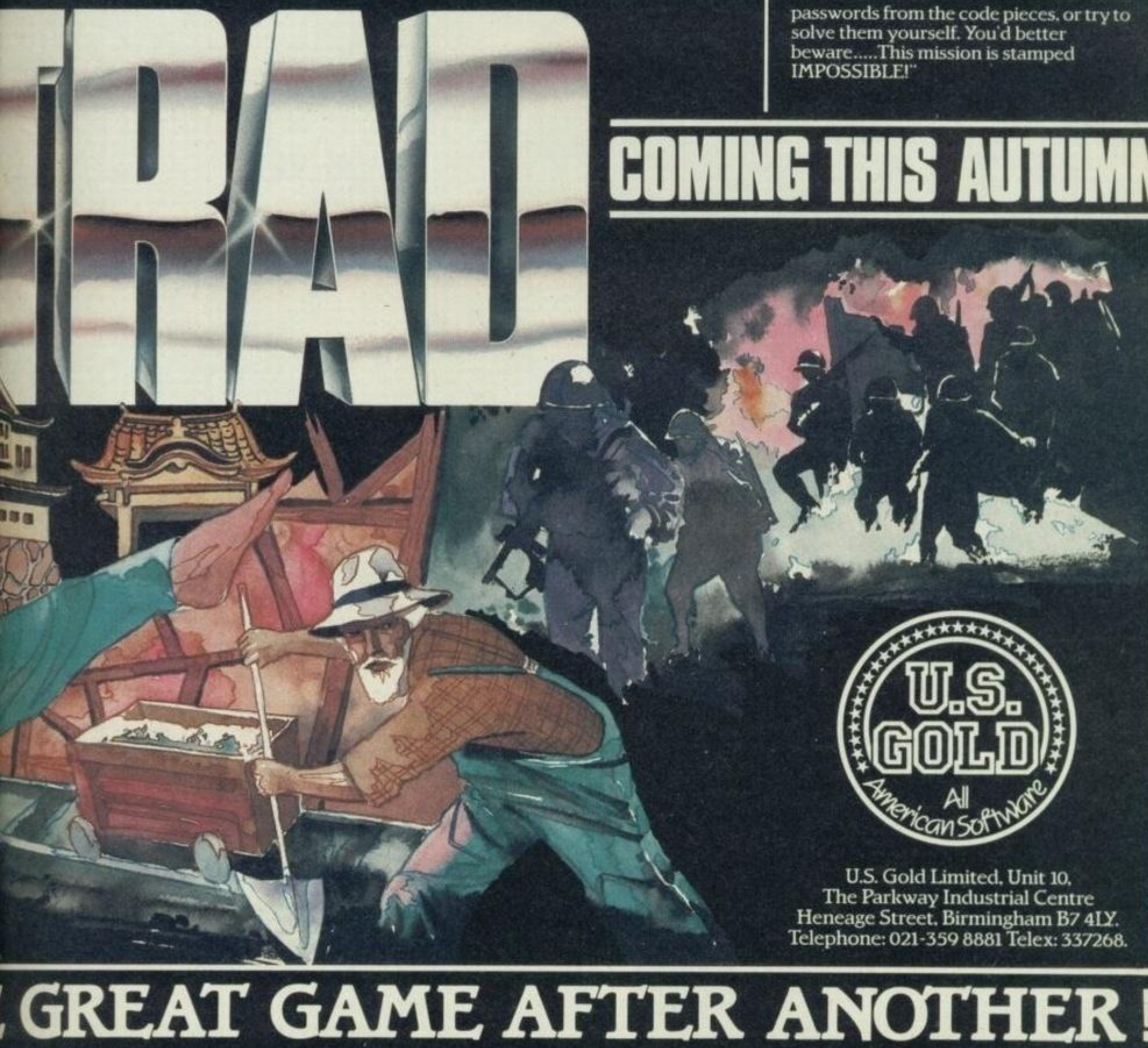

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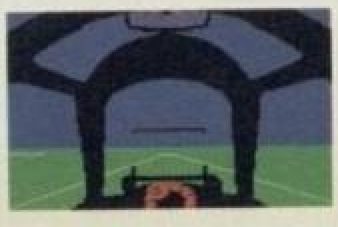

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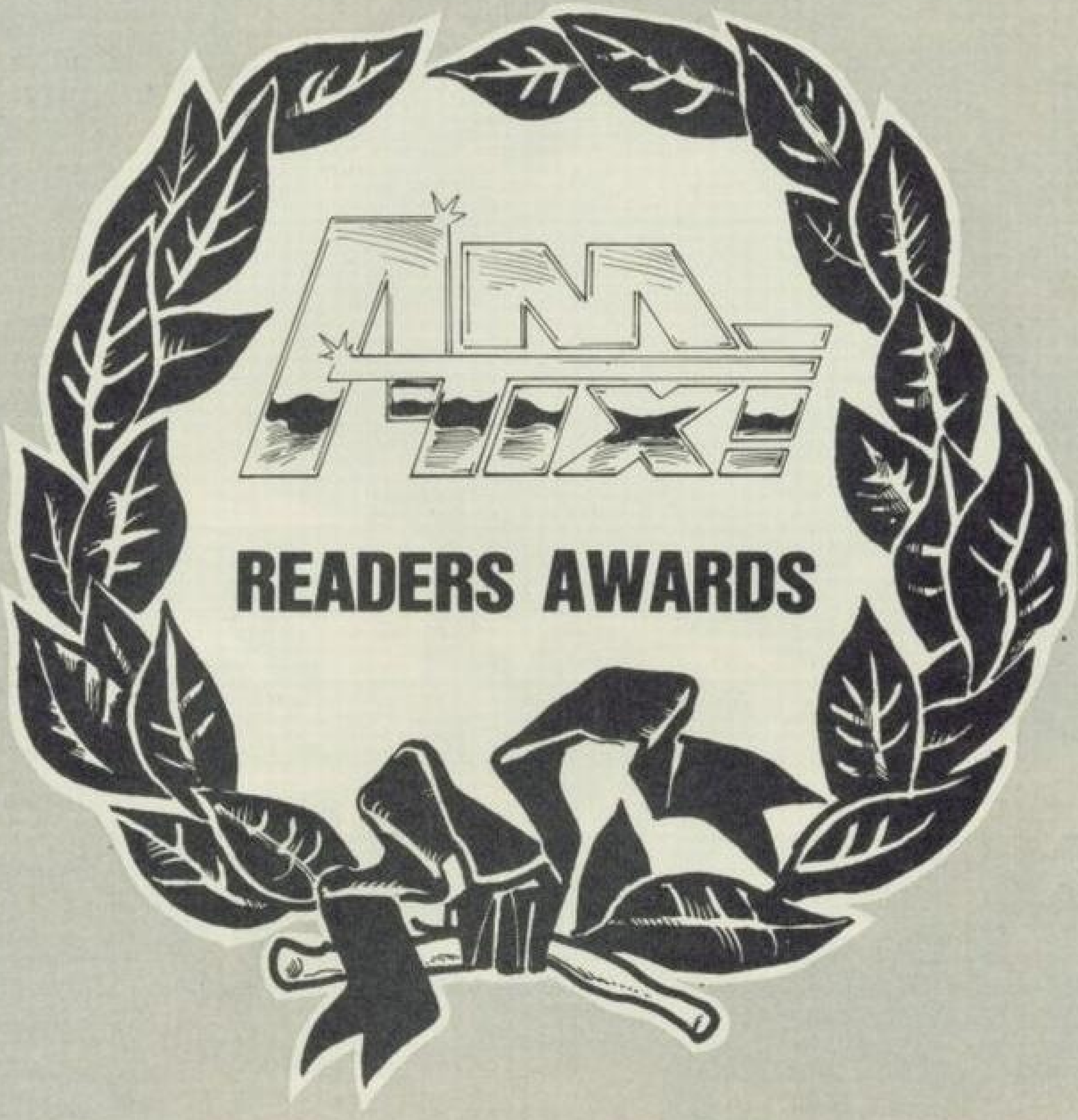

Another year is over, and in the time honoured press tradition, AMTIX! offers you, the reader, the opportunity to vote for those games you feel deserve an accolade.

This is your chance to tell the software business what you think of their programs! Your voice will reach collectively out of these pages in the uniquely democratic manner that AMTIX! has pioneered (well almost), and inform the world of the best Amstrad games for 1985.

What we have done is to think up 14 categories, and over the page there is a large form to remove from the magazine (or photocopy if you prefer). This should be filled in and sent back to us as fast as you can. Of course there's more to it than that! AMTIX! is known to be not only democratic but generous to a fault — so the first 15 forms drawn from the bag on the closing date will earn their senders a voucher for £15 worth of software as well as an AMTIX! T-shirt!

The results of the voting will be published in the March issue of AMTIX! and the highly valuable certificates of accolade will be awarded soon after to the winning companies.
Get to it!

⇨

VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!

BEST GAME OVERALL
Title & Software House

BEST PLATFORM GAME
Title & Software House

BEST SHOOT EM UP
Title & Software House

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

BEST TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

BEST GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION
Title & Software House

BEST SPORTS SIMULATION
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Title & Software House

BEST SOUND FX
Title & Software House

BEST MUSIC
Title & Software House

TACKIEST GAME OF THE YEAR
Title & Software House

For the most outstanding programming achievement of 1985

STATE OF THE ART AWARD
Title & Software House

Please cut out this page from the magazine and send it back to us as soon as possible. **Don't forget to write your name, address and T-shirt size (small, medium or large) on the form in capital letters!**

In each category enter the name of the program and the software house concerned for which you wish to vote. Please note: products must have a 1985 copyright to be elligible. The collated results will be presented as a winner with two runners-up.

There's no need to fill in every category if you cannot think of anything suitable, but obviously the more you fill in the better the end result will be.

Forms should be returned to **AMTIX! READERS AWARDS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than Monday January 20th, when the draw will be made.

Name ....
Address ....
....
.... Postcode ....
T-shirt size ....

Get a 256K SILICON DISK DRIVE — LIGHT PEN ROM — SPEECH SYNTHESISER ROM !!

The Choice is yours with these great prizes from DK'TRONICS . . .

AM-TIX!
COMPETITION

dk'tronics 64K MEMORY
dk'tronics SILICON DISC
dk'tronics 256K MEMORY
dk'tronics SPEECH
dk'tronics LIGHTPEN

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY..

I'd only been at Newsfield for a few days before Uncle Jeremy plonked a load of bumph about these expansion thingies in front of me. 'We're doing a competition and they're the prize' he said 'so get on with it.'

No consideration for the fact that I'm Apprentice Competition Minion and have had no previous experience in writing these competitions! I wouldn't mind if Boss Comp Minion could have helped me, but he was far too busy working on 'Why did Uncle Jeremy give me this competition as my first assignment as Competition Minion Apprentice?' to come across and give me a helping hand. Oh well, Boss CM did warn me that life as a comp minion is a tough one.

Anyway let's see if I can manage. Those luvverly people at **Dk'Tronics** are giving away some of their absolutely brillopad Amstrad hardware add-ons, and if you win this faberooni competition then YOU can choose your prize.

Using these add-ons you can do some pretty neat things with your Straddle. For a start you can turn your trusty ol' 464 into a gleaming 6128 (along with a bit of polish). There's also a **Light Pen ROM** so you can draw using your monitor screen as the pad. If you feel like talking dirty to your computer then you can always plug in the **ROM Speech Synthesizer** and chatter away long into the night . . .

On the other hand, if slow memory storage and accessing really get's up your snout then the **256K Silicon Disk** sounds just the right sort of thing to speed things up. Compatible with both 464, 664 and 6128 computers the silicon disk allows you to use 'b' and 'c' drives automatically.

Tempted by these goodies, eh? Well, there's **THREE first prizes of any two of these products and a further THREE prizes of any one**. All you have to do is name five songs with **'MEMORY'** in them. Easy, huh? Okay, so it's not so easy, but then, just as I have just found out, life never is . . .

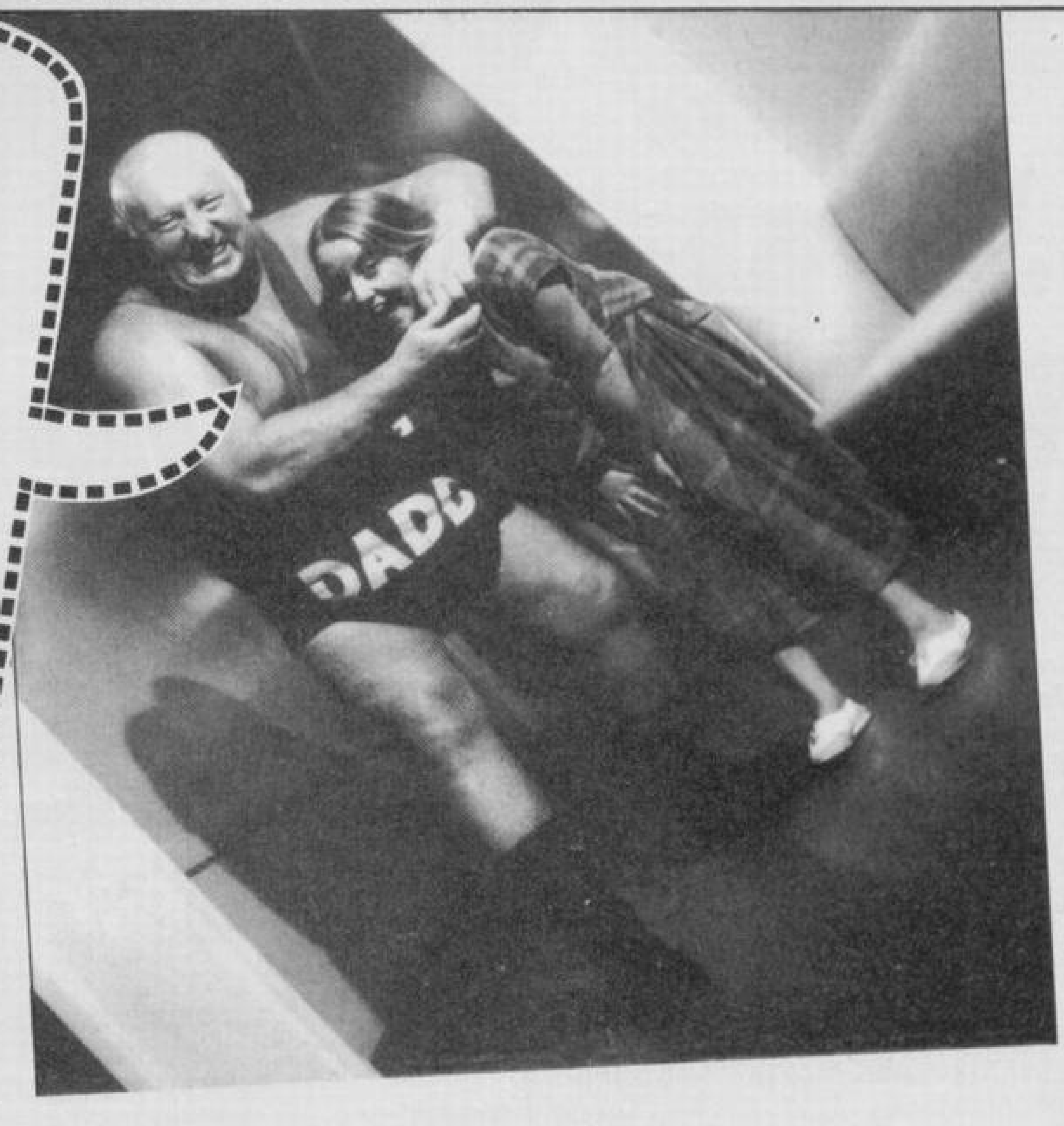
Get searching through your old record collection and send your entry in (postcards please, or back of sealed envelopes), complete with five songs with the word 'memory' (or 'memories') in the titles to NAME THAT SONG, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to reach us by 30th January. By the way, be kind to our mail sorters by making sure that you put AMTIX on the envelope . . .

SO YOU THINK YOU'D MAKE A CAPTION WRITER?

HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF POUNDS WORTH OF SOFTWARE TO BE WON IN THE MELBOURNE HOUSE PHOTO CAPTION COMP

AM-TIX! COMPETITION

You could win the Complete Works of Melbourne House for the Amstrad



Out with your caption writer's thinking cap, sharpen a pencil (or biro, if you're daft enough) and fill in the speech bubble. Send off the piccy, remembering to add your name and address, and you could win a prize of epic proportions if your entry arrives by 30th January 1986. Entries please, to ROCK 'N WRESTLE, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... POST CODE ....

It's amazing what you have to do nowadays, when you work for a company as a Publicity Person. I mean, there was Melbourne House's PAULA BYRNE (she's Wonderful), sitting quietly in the office one day, pondering what she should do to promote the whizzo new wrestling game Big Daddy's Rock'n Wrestle when in stepped the man himself ... In full wrestling gear.

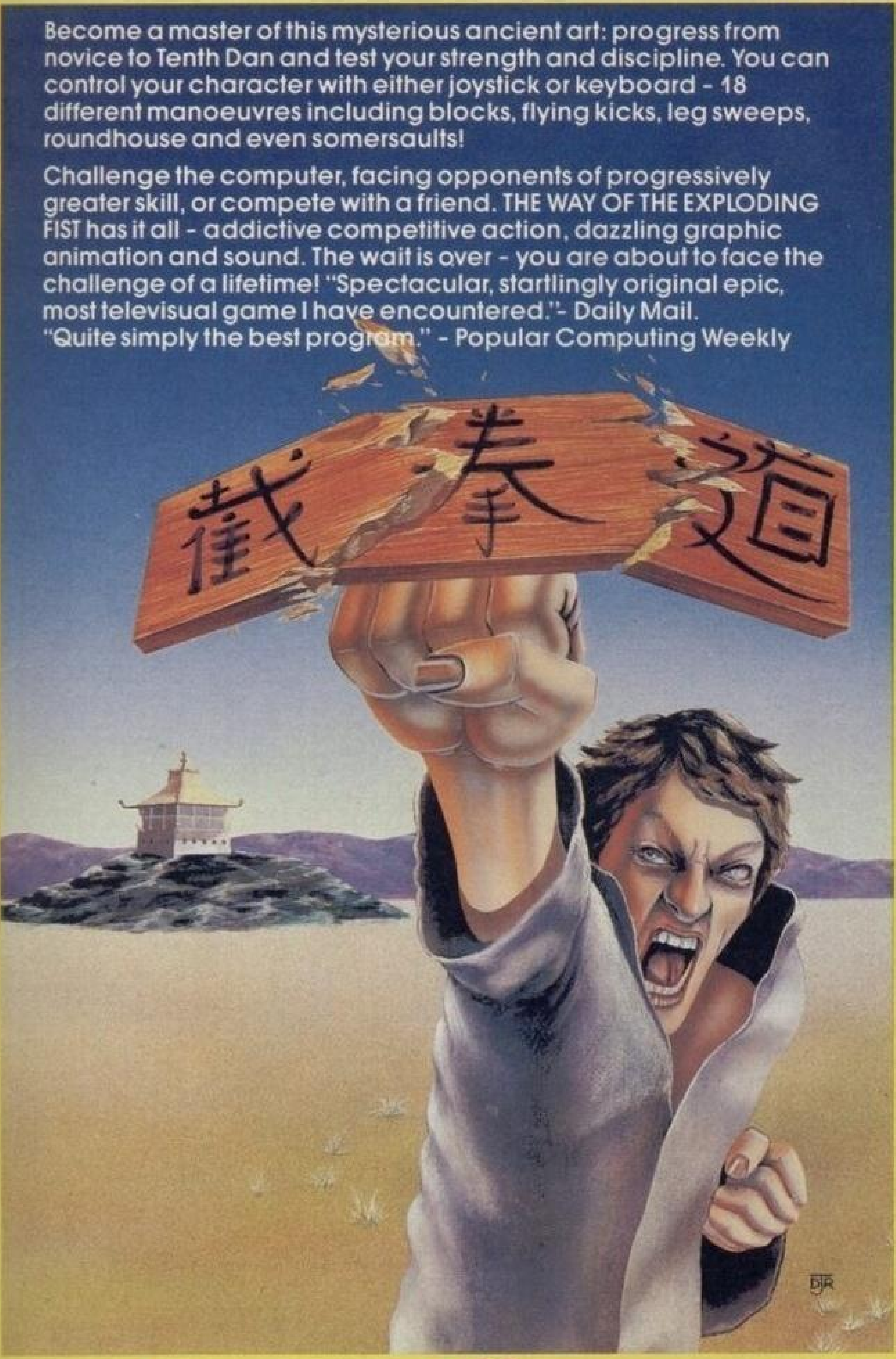
"Aha", said a passing photographer. And "Oho" as an idea crossed his mind. And before Paula could finish writing the press release telling people about the 25 different wrestling moves contained in the game, she found herself in a corridor, with Big Daddy's arm round her neck being snapped by the superkeen lensman for a publicity shot.

Then it was back to the office for Paula, to add the paragraph about the ten opponents you meet in the game and the rock sound track that plays along while you wrestle. All in the the working day of your average Melbourne House Publicity Person, you understand.

And now the photo has been developed, printed and sent to sunny Ludlow. Paula, you see, was a bit stuck as to how to caption it. So she decided to offer one set of Melbourne House's complete works to the writer of the best caption for the photie. And fifty copies of the game BIG DADDY'S ROCK 'N WRESTLE will go to the runners up. So if you think you're the wittiest person alive, here's your chance to cash in on your talent.

ROCK, WRESTLE and WRITE!

THE WAY OF THE
exploding fist



Become a master of this mysterious ancient art: progress from novice to Tenth Dan and test your strength and discipline. You can control your character with either joystick or keyboard - 18 different manoeuvres including blocks, flying kicks, leg sweeps, roundhouse and even somersaults!

Challenge the computer, facing opponents of progressively greater skill, or compete with a friend. THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST has it all - addictive competitive action, dazzling graphic animation and sound. The wait is over - you are about to face the challenge of a lifetime! "Spectacular, startlingly original epic, most televisual game I have encountered."- Daily Mail. "Quite simply the best program." - Popular Computing Weekly

"The Way of the Exploding Fist is virtually beyond criticism – technically brilliant and visually absorbing."
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY

"Melbourne House's karate simulation explodes on to the Amstrad. This is a great arcade scoring game as well as wonderful family entertainment.
In Way of the Exploding Fist, Melbourne House have scored a great hit."
AMTIX

"As a sports simulation, this is one of the finest and most realistic we have seen. As an arcade game, it's addictive and pacy. It's clearly destined for the top."
SINCLAIR USER

"I can't tear myself away from this hit game, a karate contest called The Way of the Exploding Fist."
DAILY EXPRESS

"The graphics made my eyes pop out. Fantastic sound effects, state of the art animation and brilliant game play. One of those games that you can get out time and time again."
ZZAP

"By far and away the best sports combat simulation available. Exploding Fist on the Spectrum is the best game."
CRASH

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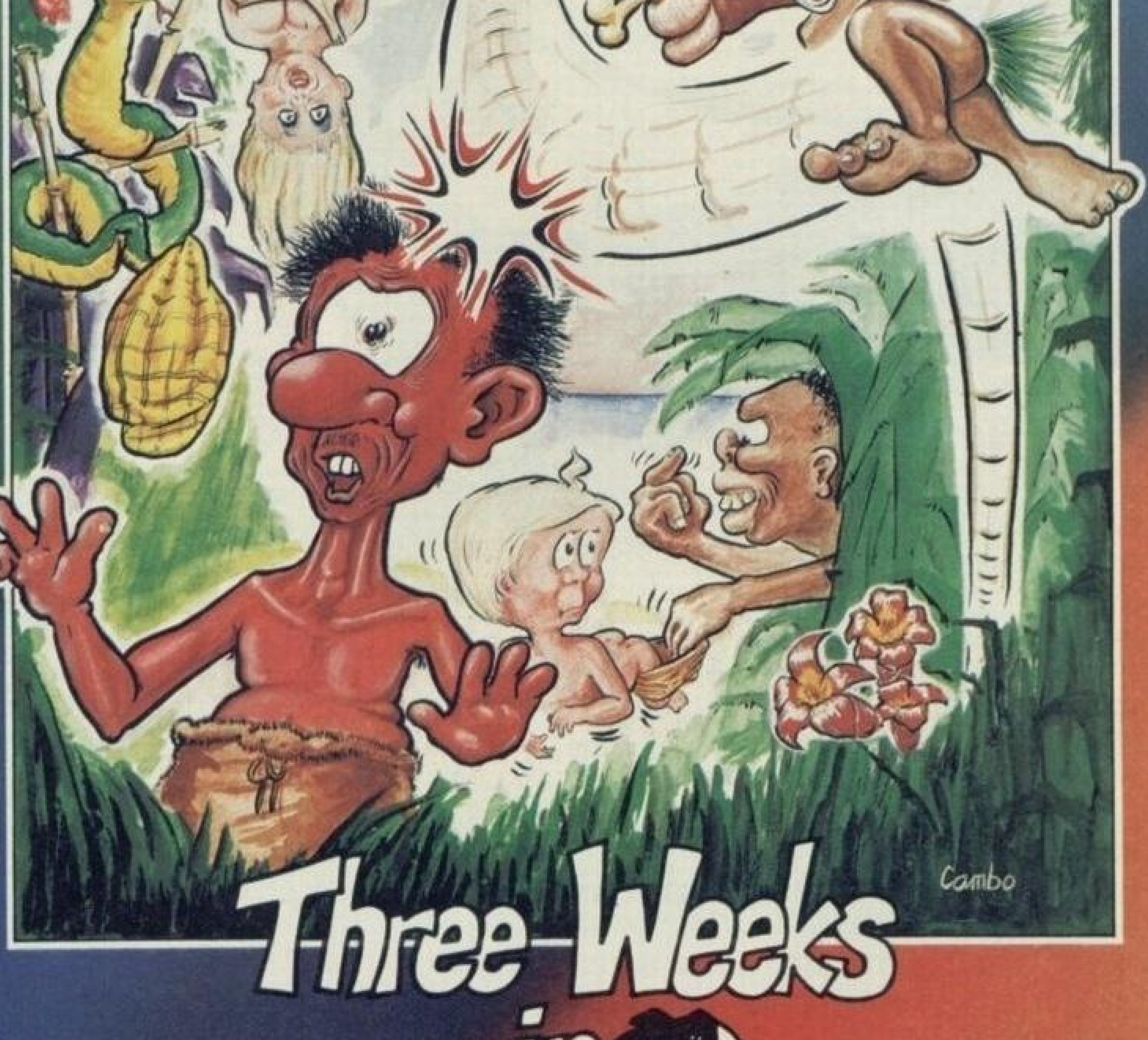

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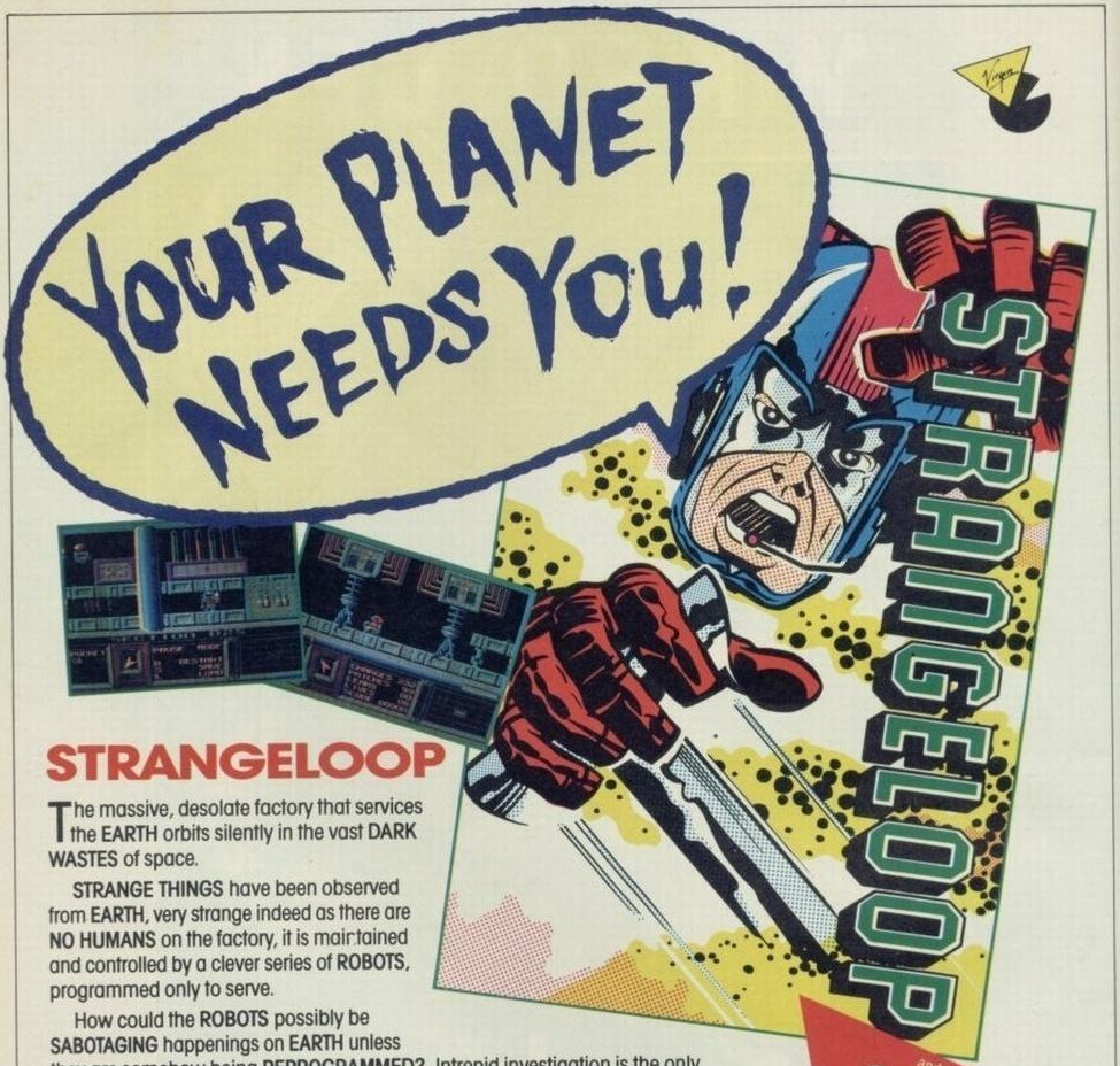


STRANGELOOP

The massive, desolate factory that services the **EARTH** orbits silently in the vast **DARK WASTES** of space.

STRANGE THINGS have been observed from **EARTH**, very strange indeed as there are **NO HUMANS** on the factory, it is maintained and controlled by a clever series of **ROBOTS**, programmed only to serve.

How could the **ROBOTS** possibly be **SABOTAGING** happenings on **EARTH** unless they are somehow being **REPROGRAMMED?** Intrepid investigation is the only way to find out exactly what is going on...and it must be **YOU!**

250 rooms of **EXPLORATION, PUZZLES** to resolve and **CURIOUS ROBOTS** to meet. **GRAPHICALLY STUNNING**, full of **ACTION** and **AMUSING** encounters, this is arcade adventuring at its absolute peak.

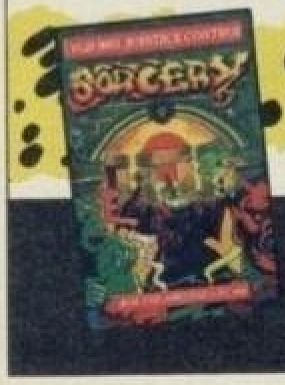
and for only **£8.95**

This what they were saying about **STRANGELOOP** before they even saw this version

"Strangeloop is unique, graphically impressive, vast, and devious; in short, brill..." **Personal Computing Weekly.**

"...you've got to use your brain as well as your joystick...Strangeloop graphics are superb...a real Screen Star if ever I saw one" **Commodore User**

"This is a very big and superior arcade adventure...an elegantly designed game" **Your Commodore.**



Remember "SORCERY", this year's most ACCLAIMED title for the AMSTRAD? Well VIRGIN GAMES' unrivalled reputation for AMSTRAD software is upheld again with the Gang of Five's latest MASTERPIECE.

AM-TIPS

from Robin Candy

After last month's slow start the tips have been flooding in! I'm still looking for well presented maps and Pokes that haven't appeared elsewhere. As far as tips go, I would appreciate help on *Sorcery Plus* and *Marsport*.

This month has been a bit hectic, what with all three mags produced in Ludlow coming out at the same time AND all the new releases to be reviewed. I'm pleased to say that the Amstrad software is picking up: the standard of some of the stuff being released nowadays is beginning to challenge both the Spectrum and the CBM 64, and is a vast improvement over the software that was being sold this time last year.

Right then. That's enough of the intro stuff, so on with the tips . . .

STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER

To get any break score you wish just follow this method, as sent in by Philip Doherty of Luton. It is a bit of a cheat, but it'll probably help improve your potting skills for when you wish to play properly.

When you have potted a red then pot a colour. Now retake the shot and pot the colour again. Repeat this process until you have got the break that you want.

SORCERY

Another set of small tips — this time they are from Darren Hill of Presfromn. If you're stuck in the classic *Sorcery* then you may find the next bit of info interesting.

To free the sorcerers you need the following objects in these screens:

Goblet of Wine in the Wastelands;
Little Lyre in the Palace;
Spell Book in the first Chateau;
Golden Chalice in the second Chateau;
Magic Wand in the Tunnel;
Scroll in the Dungeons;
Sorceror's Moon in Stonehenge;
Jewelled Crown in the Strong room.

BASEBALL

It is a shame that this game didn't turn out to be as good as the versions on the CBM and Spectrum. But if you have bought it, then this tip sent in by Duncan Kessack of Staines is an almost foolproof way of getting the computer's men out, though you will have to practice this method for a while before you can start winning matches.

First of all, when one of the Amstrad's players has hit the ball let him get to the first base. Now throw the ball to the fielder on the first base and get him to throw the ball to the bowler, and the Amstrad's player should run a short way towards the second base. While the Amstrad's player is making this short run towards the second base, throw the ball back again to the fielder who is guarding the first base. The Amstrad's player will then return to the first base and be stumped out.

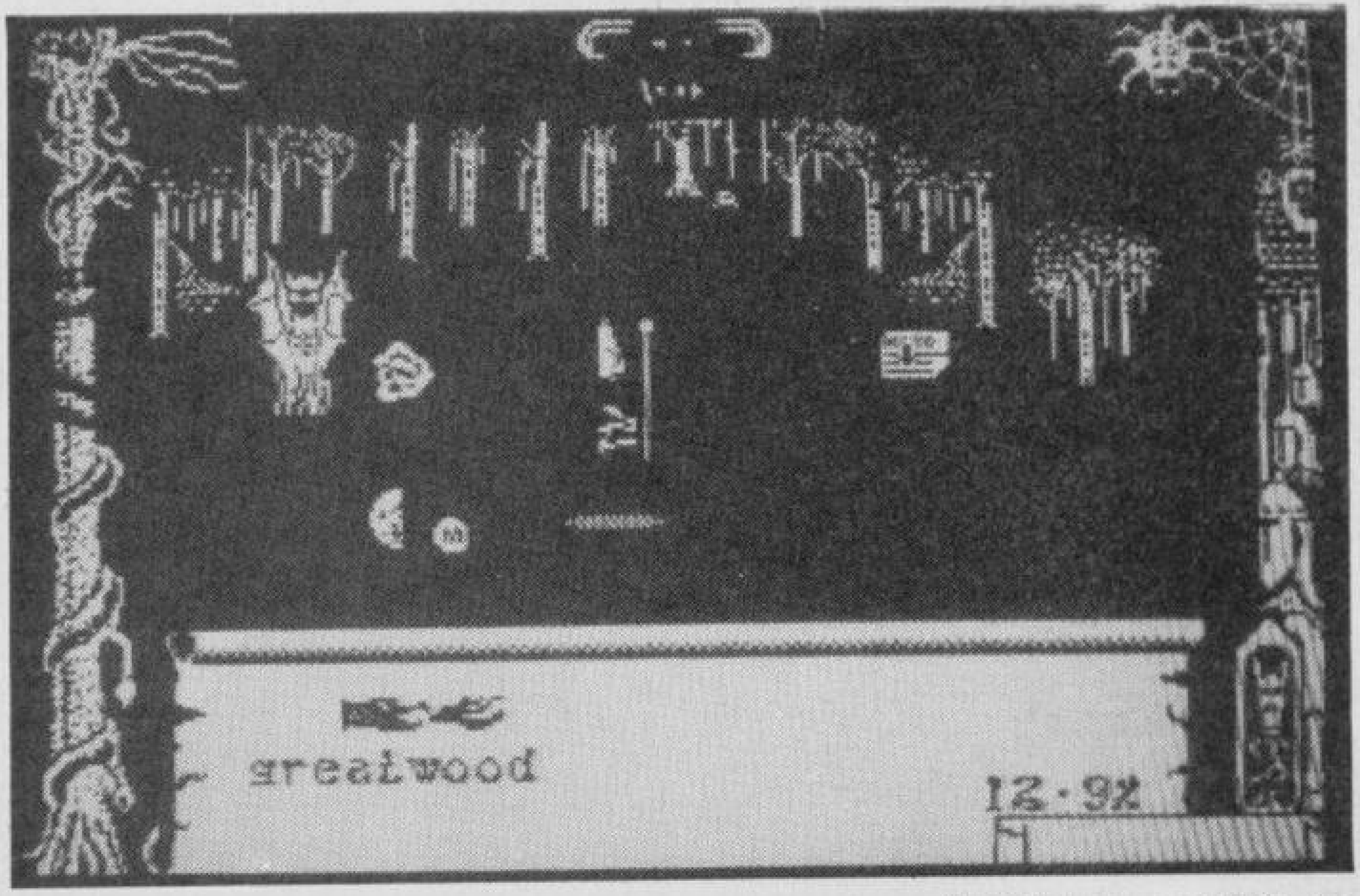
DRAGONTORC

If some of you have been left behind in the Vaults of Locris then fret no more because listed below are some tips to help you out. The problem seems to be getting the letter I. If this is what is puzzling you, then read on, but if you don't want your enjoyment of the game spoiled then skip the next bit.

Go to the room with the stool and fireball in it and move the servant over the stool; this will change it into a chest. Open all the other chests in the vault and you should have two keys. One of these opens the chest by the fireball. Open this chest and the fireball should change into the half moon and inside the chest is the letter I.

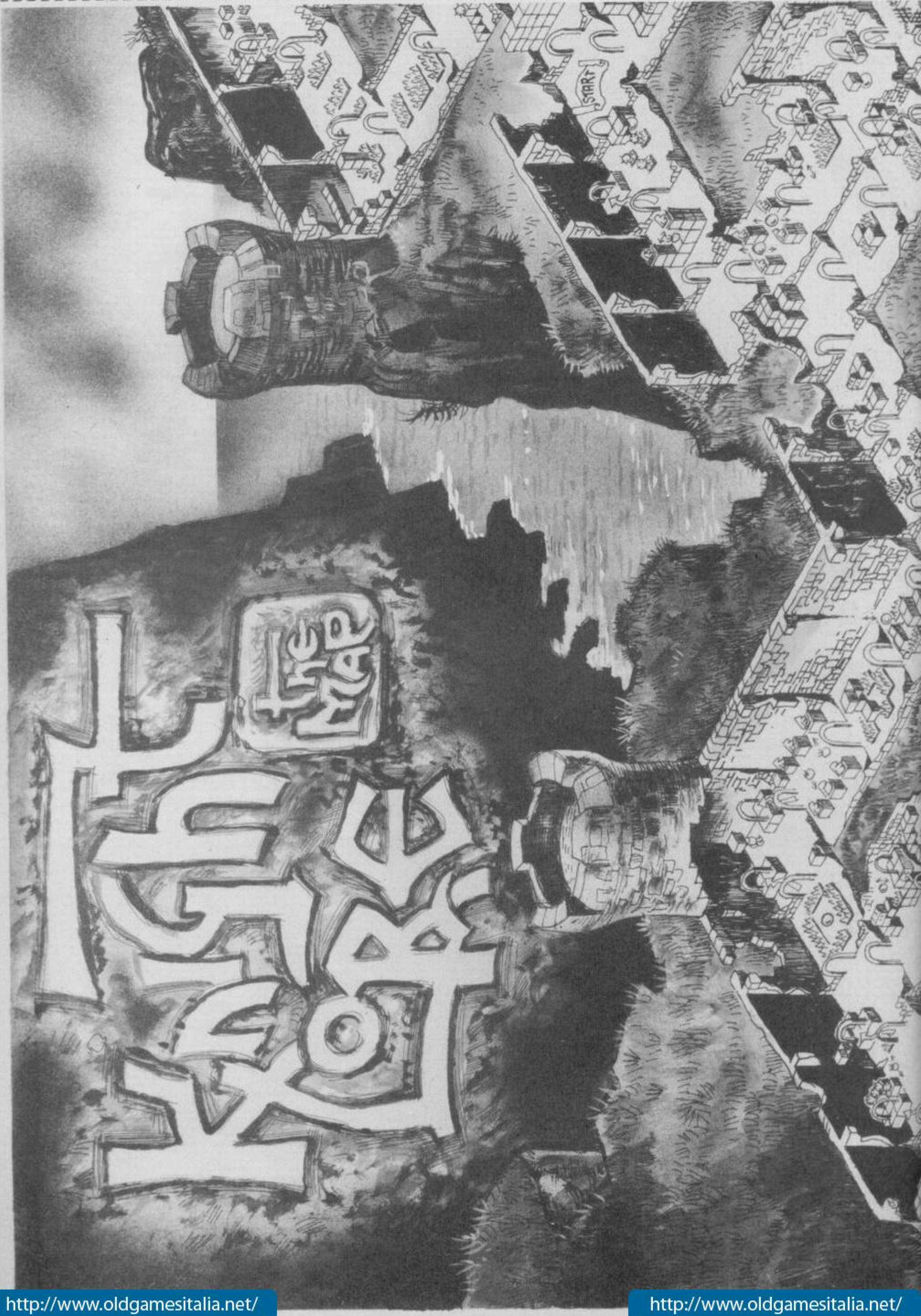
For those bright sparks amongst you who have got to Halgor's Sanctuary, go and find, and then take, the energy herb. Now find the skelebone and search to get the diving rod. With the diving rod search the leaves and pools to receive the BANE jewel and the Crystal of Anti-thought. Use the Seal to open the tombstone and go down. Read the message and leave everything except Halgor's Seal and go through the door. Touch the Seal on the three spiders before they kill you. Take the three spells. Use the RETURN spell to get into Halgor's tomb room. Search the tomb for the door key to get out. Leave with half moon and go to Witchwood to find Sanctuary for the key to the Locris vaults.

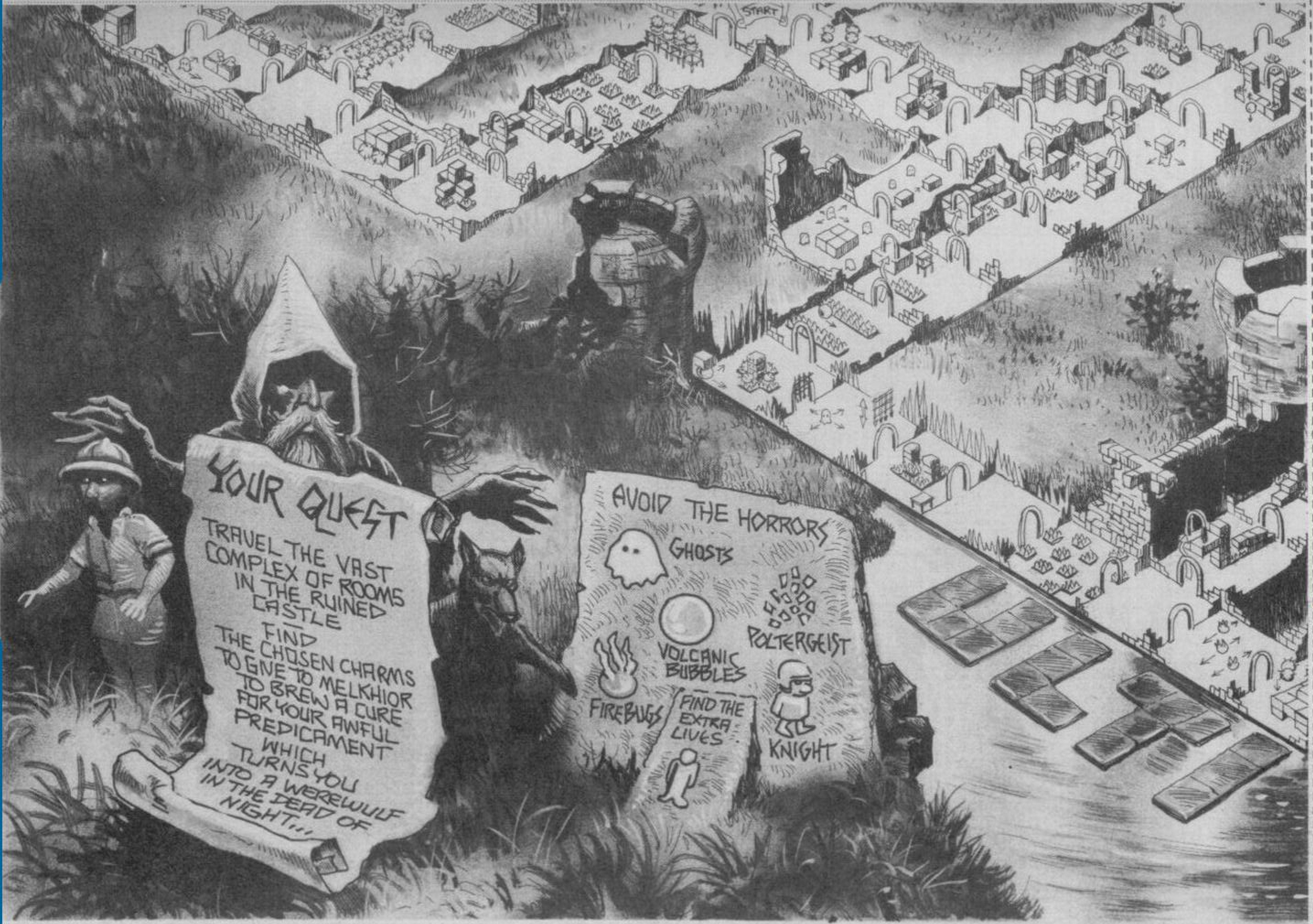
You should now be in Witchwood. Find the message that says 'Batswing, witchleaf, frogleg will reveal' and then collect the bat, the herb and the frog that is in a pool. Now put these into the cauldron and get the wand that floats out. Go next door and use the wand to move the flagstone. Take the elf gem and the spell. Give the elf that wanders around the woods the



48

THIS IS PART ONE OF THE MAP — CUT ALONG THE EDGES AND JOIN TO PART TWO ON PAGES 56–57


Knight Lore
the map
START

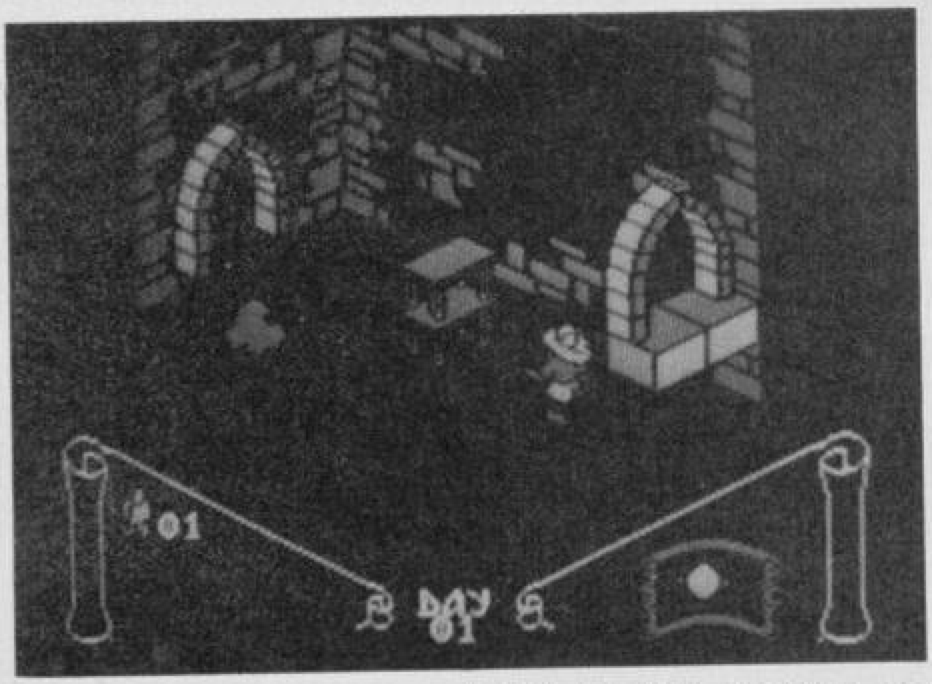

START
YOUR QUEST
TRAVEL THE VAST COMPLEX OF ROOMS IN THE RUINED CASTLE
FIND THE CHOSEN CHARMS TO GIVE TO MELKHIOR TO BREW A CURE FOR YOUR AWFUL PREDICAMENT WHICH TURNS YOU INTO A WEREWULF IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...
AVOID THE HORRORS
GHOSTS
POLTERGEIST
VOLCANIC BUBBLES
FIREBUGS
KNIGHT
FIND THE EXTRA LIVES

gem in return for the other half of the Moon Key. Now construct the whole key and take the Full Moon. Deactivate the magic sword with the wand and take it. Now cut down the sapling with the magic sword to make a magic broom with which to sweep the leaves. You should then find a second large stone and a message. 'What full moon reveals take it with steel' this means use the Moon on the stone but don't go without the Moon or magic sword. Before you go, move the other flagstone in the woods for the Light spell. Now proceed to Sanctuary.

You can kill the goblins with the Missile spell and protect yourself against the Demon's missiles with Mantle. If you walk into the Cursed Scroll you are transported to a doorless room. Use the Leyrod to reveal the exit. Uncurse the scroll with the sword to get the message 'The vault of Locris is opened with Sunkey' this is the object you are looking for. One of the goblins has the Sunkey and another has a green chest key which opens three chests. In dark rooms use the light spell. In one of these rooms is a cursed wand — use the sword on this to take the curse off which then gives you the message 'I can find what I hid where it is blackest'. Now use the sword on the magic spiders to gain some more spells. Unlock a green chest with the green key to get the message 'One leads to a gate through the other locate'. This is meant to be read in conjunction with the message you get on the Locate spell which you receive when you destroy the winged demon.

Look for two doors side by side — one has an exit cube in it — then you must use Locate inside it to find a green chest which is unlocked by using the green key. Take the cursed key which has a message from inside the chest. The message is 'One lost, one in ruins, one in hell, one cursed' this gives you clues to the whereabouts of each of the crowns. It also gives you the order in which to destroy the crowns. To get to the two doors side by side two keys must be found. One is 'where it is blackest', ie in a dark room. Use the Light spell to light the room and search the room with the wand. The key is on the back wall under a stone carving. Also search the tomb with the Servant for the Wall spell and kill the wraith with the Bane spell. Use the door key to open the locked door by the goblins and inside is a green chest which is opened with the green key. Leave the old door key and take the one that you have just got out of the chest. Now proceed through a dark room and open the locked door, at the other side, with the door key. Go through this door and you should be in the room with the doors side by side.

Use the Fullmoon and the Sunkey to reveal the exit cube and leave with the Sunkey and Cursed key. Now go back to the vaults of Locris.



KNIGHT LORE

Andrew Lang **of Lochmaddy** sent in this program for Ultimate's blockbuster. Just type in the proggy and save it to tape for future use then run the program and start your *Knightlore* original from the start.

```
10 MEMORY &1999
20 LOAD "0", &2000
30 FOR F 4 0 TO 15
40 READ A¼
50 POKE &A000 1, VAL ("&" 1
A¼)
60 NEXT
70 POKE &49C9, 0
80 POKE &3C4E, 0: POKE
&3C4F, 0: POKE &3C50, 0
90 MODE 1
100 CALL &A000
110 DATA F3, 21, 00, 20, 11,
00, 00, 01
120 DATA 00, 80, ED, B0, C3,
00, 00, 00
```

TECHNICIAN TED

These tips originally appeared in issue 0. I know that many of you haven't got that issue (*available mail order, though, only 50p!* — ED) so here they are again. Anyway this helpful information was sent in by Michael Roland of West Germany. Incidentally, has anyone managed to crack *Technician Ted* on the Amstrad for infinite lives pokes etc?

You must complete these tasks within the time limits printed by each one:
Ted's Desk by 8:56
Silicon Slice Store by 9:09
Slice Diffusion by 9:27
Fuming Cupboard by 9:58
Clean Room by 10:07
Silicon Etching Plant by 10:22
Canteen by 10:40
Photocopier by 11:12
Boardroom by 11:25
Slice Surface Abrasion by 11:56
Laser Slice Separation by 12:15
Bay 7 by 12:34
Micro Chip Mounting by 12:59
Tea Machine 13:02
Power Generator by 13:18
Electro Plating Bath by 14:00
Quality Assurance Dept 14:25
Abrasion Dust Extract by 14:38
Matthew's Lair by 14:58
We Call Him Sir by 15:50
The Wage Department by 16:07

After completing the Wage Department then you must go to the picket line, up to the Union flag and again down to the Picket line (in the middle). From here you can now go left and into a new room called OK! WHERE DO I GET MY REWARD. Go into this room and walk left through the exit room to complete the game. You MUST keep with in the time limit if you wish to complete the game. To plan out your routes to and from rooms use the map that should appear in this issue.

STARION

Here is more of *STARION*'s solution sent in by Tim Dawson of Farnham. The final part of which will appear next month. It should be easy to follow but let me know if you have any problems.

BLOCK 2 GRID 1

AD 1882: SHERLOCK — Detective begins in 'A study in scarlet'
AD 1983: YACHT — Australia's has a winged hull
AD 1894: ARGON — Rayleigh and Ramsay's inert gas
AD 1982: HEART — Barney Clark's is artificial
AD 1971: PENCE — Britain's new pennies
AD 0570: MECCA — Muhammid's birthplace
AD 1880: EXETER — Necktie appears in Oxford college
AD 1962: MISSILE — Crisis in Cuba
BC 0257: EUREKA — 'I have found it' quoth Archemides
GRID PASSWORD: EMPHYSEMA

BLOCK 2 GRID 2

AD 1665: RATS — Great plague carriers
AD 1666: PUDDING — Sweet lane in the great fire of London
AD 1215: SCROLL — Stationery Magna Carta
AD 1956: AMPEX — First video recording system
AD 1903: ORVILLE — He's right in 'The Flyer'
AD 1484: CLAM — From this Botticelli's Venus is born
AD 1829: OARS — Help Oxford win the boat race
AD 1565: LISA — Leonardo's morning lady
AD 1773: IRON — Metal for Coalbrookdale's bridge
GRID PASSWORD: ACROPOLIS

BLOCK 2 GRID 3

AD 1557: RUDDER — Steer Drake's Golden Hind around the world
AD 1961: PIGS — JFK's fiasco in this cuban bay
AD 1913: GEIGER — He

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counts Alpha particles

AD 1602: PENDULUM — Galileo's swinger

AD 1959: SILICON — Integrated circuit is backwards

AD 1876: TELEPHONE — Alexander Graham's has a ring to it

AD 1919: AIRSHIP — Transatlantic first

AD 1932: NEUTRON — No charge

AD 1916: INTERRUPT — Prevent bullet hitting the Baron's propellor

GRID PASSWORD: STRAPPING

BLOCK 2 GRID 4

AD 0035: KISS — Judas shops Jesus with one

AD 1785: EDITOR — 'The Thunderer' needs control

AD 1935: RADAR — Palindromic Radio detection and Ranging

AD 1596: THERMOMETER — Galilei takes temperature

AD 1916: ALCOHOL — Getting prohibitively stopped in America

AD 1834: ANODE — Faraday's positive about electrolysis

AD 1928: MOUSE — Mickey the rodent is born

AD 1933: REICH — Chancellor Hitler proclaims third

AD 1853: DICKENS — Carol's Christmas author

GRID PASSWORD: TRADEMARK

BLOCK 2 GRID 5

AD 1862: LIGHT — Focault can't see its speed

AD 1854: CARDIGAN — General woolly charge of the Light Brigade

BC 0027: AUGUSTUS — Octavian's new identity

AD 1938: BIRO — He makes a point of balls

AD 1820: AMPERE — Andre — Marie's current unit

AD 1815: LAMP — Davy's minor genius

AD 1928: ANTIBIOTIC — Fleming's penicillin is the first

AD 1811: AUSTEN — 'Sense and Sensibility' Jane

AD 1961: VOSTOK — Gregarin's ship

GRID PASSWORD: BALACLAVA

BLOCK 2 GRID 6

BC 0300: EUCLID — His space is geometric

AD 1888: FILM — Moving pictures are made of this

AD 1900: LABOUR — Found working party

AD 1981: WEDDING — Royal couple couple

AD 1744: ANTHEM — 'God save the King' will become ours

AD 0037: NAILS — Carpenter's material for suspension

AD 1747: KITE — Franklin's flying conductor

AD 1948: ORWELL — Big Brother's father

AD 1907: SHELL — Royal Dutch hatches

GRID PASSWORD: SNOWFLAKE

BLOCK 2 GRID 7

AD 1834: ENGINE — Babbage's calculating device

AD 1000: ERICSSON — He finds a new land in America

BC 0776: ATHLETE — Olympic contestant starts the Greek calendar

AD 1590: GALILEI — He dropped his balls off the Tower of Pisa

AD 1855: GAS — Fuel for Von Bunsen's device

AD 1954: ATOLL — Hydrogen bikini on a coral island

AD 1936: GOLDS — Owens gets four in Berlin

AD 1963: RUBY — Gem shoots Lee Harvey Oswald

AD 1908: T — Ford's Model

GRID PASSWORD: AGGREGATE

BLOCK 2 GRID 8

AD 1941: JET — Whittle powerlessly

AD 1957: SPUTNIK — Orbiting travelling companion

AD 1981: SHUTTLE — Reusable rocket from Badminton

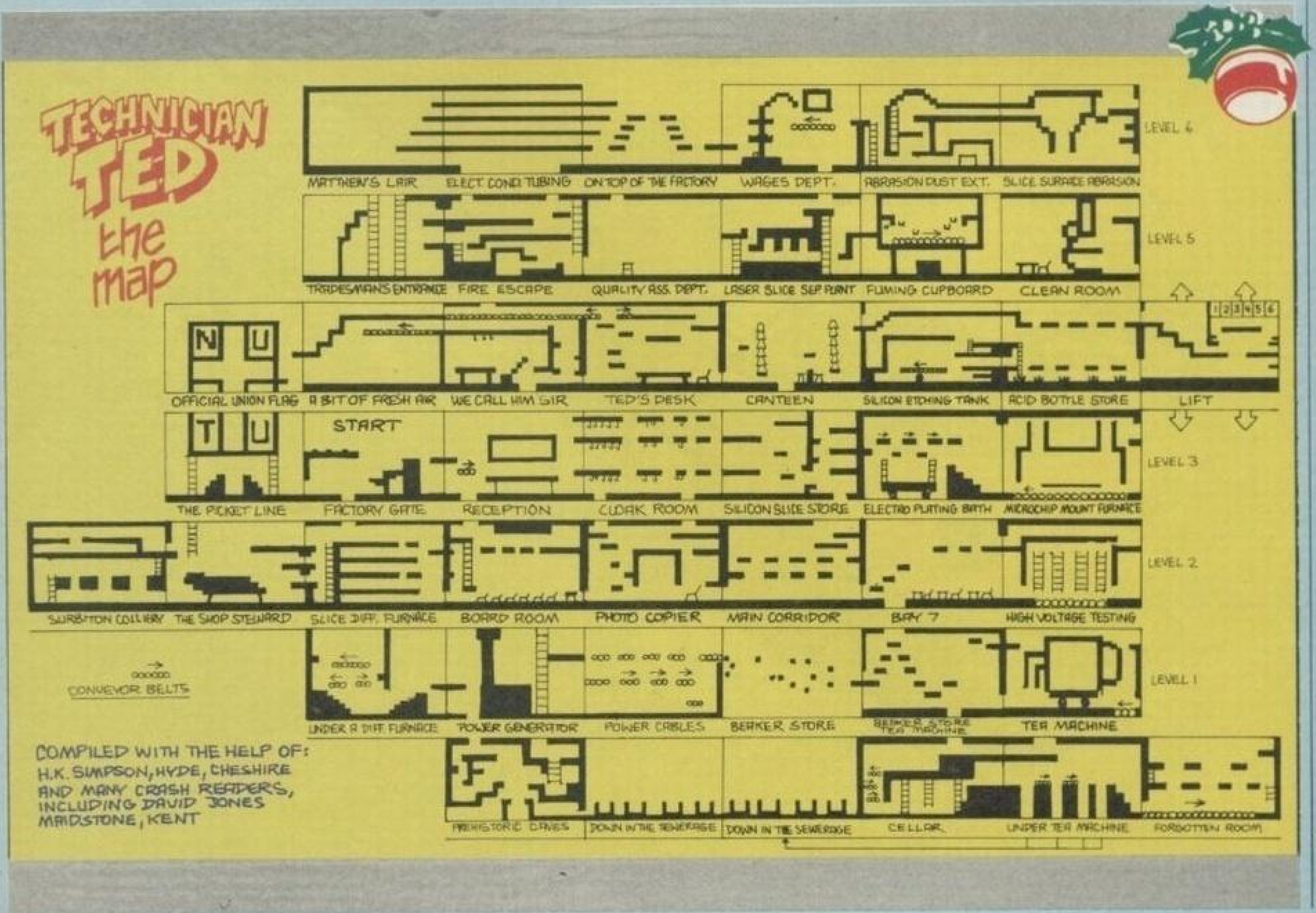
AD 1896: TORCH — Light the modern Olympics

AD 1898: ESCALATOR — Moving stairs in Harrods

AD 1944: IMF — Found Money, fund in Bretton woods

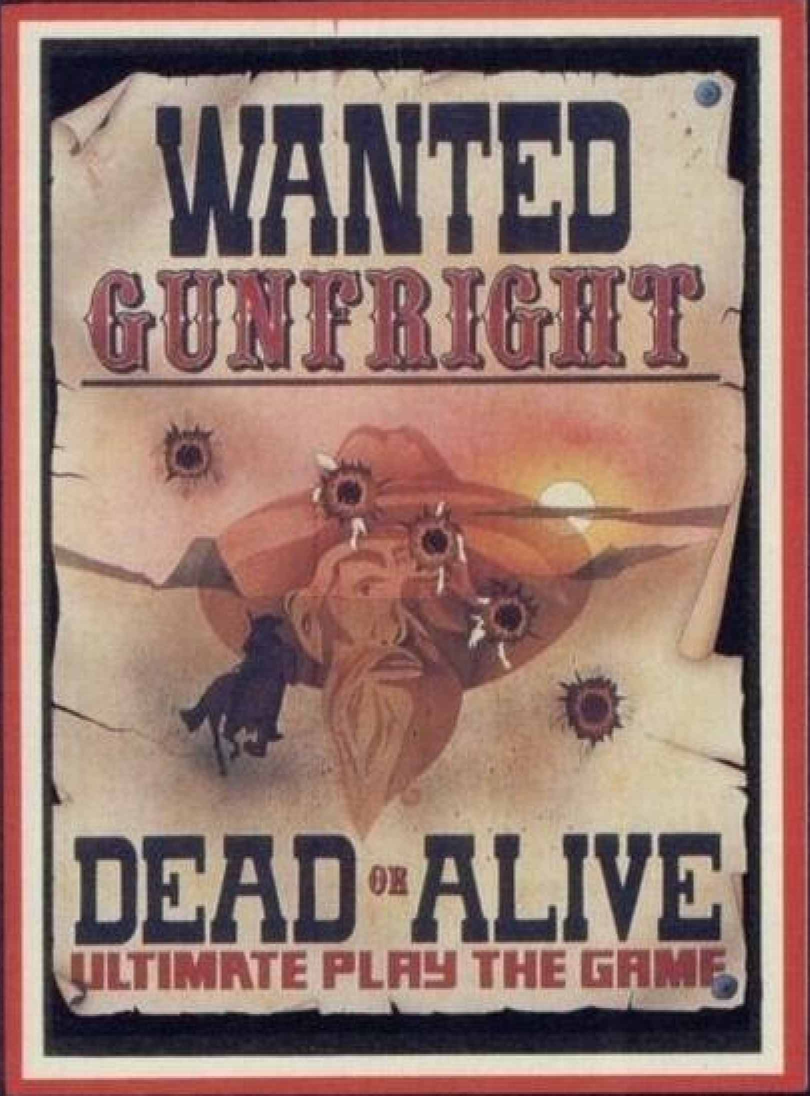
AD 1806: ARC — Triumphant symbol in Paris

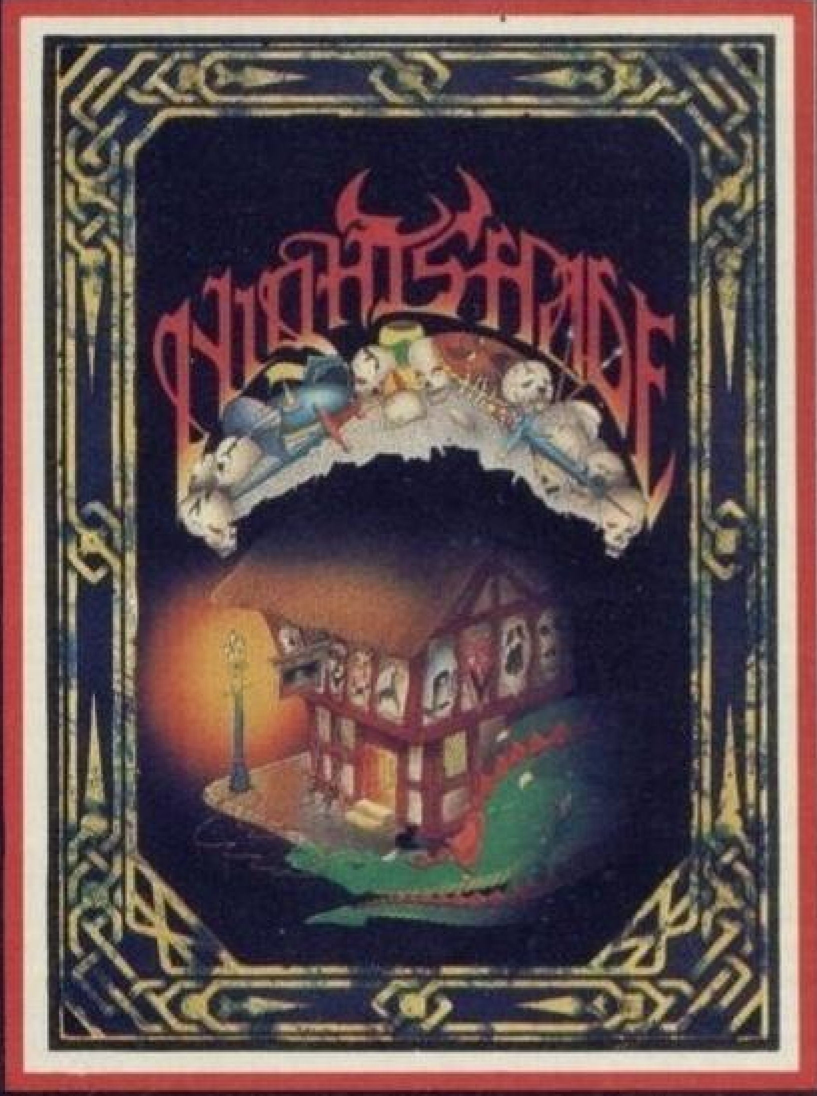
BC 0417: ELECTRA — Euripedes has a complex


TECHNICIAN TED
the map
LEVEL 6
MATTHEW'S LAIR
ELECT. COND. TUBING
ON TOP OF THE FACTORY
WAGES DEPT.
ABRASION DUST EXT.
SLICE SURFACE ABRASION
LEVEL 5
TRADESMANS ENTRANCE
FIRE ESCAPE
QUALITY ASS. DEPT.
LASER SLICE SEP PLANT
FUMING CUPBOARD
CLEAN ROOM
N
U
1 2 3 4 5 6
OFFICIAL UNION FLAG
A BIT OF FRESH AIR
WE CALL HIM SIR
TED'S DESK
CANTEEN
SILICON ETCHING TANK
ACID BOTTLE STORE
LIFT
T
U
START
LEVEL 3
THE PICKET LINE
FACTORY GATE
RECEPTION
CLOAK ROOM
SILICON SLICE STORE
ELECTRO PLATING BATH
MICROCHIP MOUNT FURNACE
LEVEL 2
SURBITON COLLIERY
THE SHOP STEWARD
SLICE DIFF. FURNACE
BOARD ROOM
PHOTO COPIER
MAIN CORRIDOR
BAY 7
HIGH VOLTAGE TESTING
CONVEYOR BELTS
LEVEL 1
UNDER A DIFF. FURNACE
POWER GENERATOR
POWER CABLES
BEAKER STORE
BEAKER STORE TEA MACHINE
TEA MACHINE
COMPILED WITH THE HELP OF:
H.K. SIMPSON, HYDE, CHESHIRE
AND MANY CRASH READERS,
INCLUDING DAVID JONES
MAIDSTONE, KENT
PREHISTORIC CAVES
DOWN IN THE SEWERAGE
DOWN IN THE SEWERAGE
CELLAR
UNDER TEA MACHINE
FORGOTTEN ROOM

52

AMSTRAD CPC 464


WANTED
GUNFRIGHT
DEAD OR ALIVE
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME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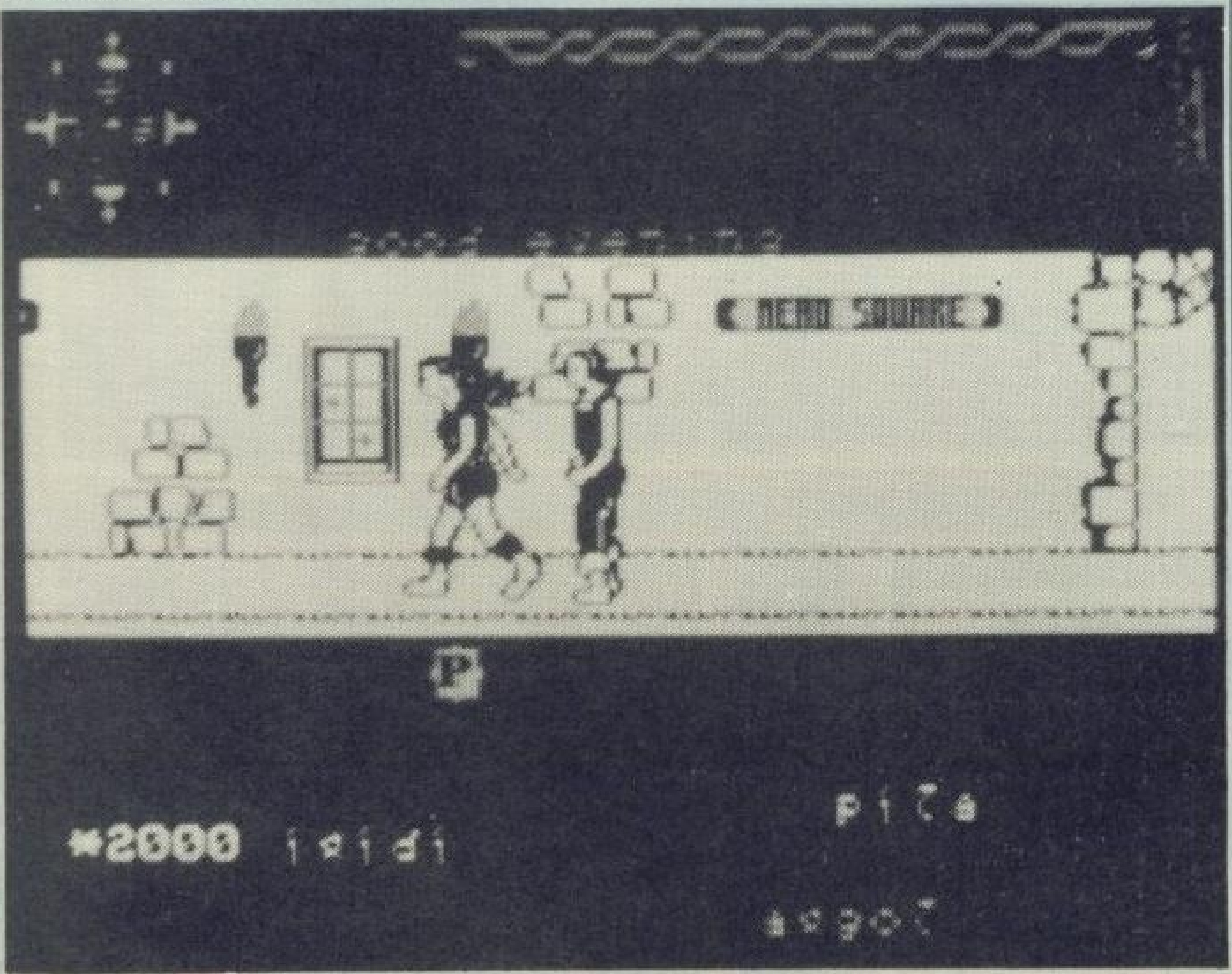
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME

AD 1721: MINISTRY — Walpole in his prime
GRID PASSWORD: MAJESTIES

BLOCK 2 GRID 9

AD 1553: MONARCH — Lady Jane's nine day position
AD 1941: OYSTERS — Pearl Harbour's contents
AD 1945: UN — Charter signed in San Francisco
AD 1926: ICI — Imperial chemical industries
AD 1495: PAINT — Material for Da Vinci's last supper
AD 1877: MARS — Schiaperelli finds canals here
AD 1882: TCHAIKOVSKY — His overture after seventy years
AD 1841: RUBBER — Material for good year for Spock
AD 1981: PACIFIC — Double Eagle V floats over it
GRID PASSWORD: IMPROMPTU
BLOCK PASSWORD: METABASIS



DUN DARACH

This month's edition of playing tips for *Dun Darach* gives you the rest of the solution needed to complete the game. In the next couple of months I hope to be printing hints for Gargoyle's *Marsport*, which is a lot harder than *Dun Darach* but fortunately I've got quite far in it. The hints printed here were compiled with help mainly from Simon Malham **of** Canterbury **and** Richard Burd **of Telford plus a cast of thousands.**

With any object, the scroll (from Skar), and the D key go to the castle. Open the first locked door with the D key and go through into a room with 3 revolving wheels (a combination lock). On one of the tables is a script with the clue 3ks 4keys, WITH LOVE. This is a clue to the combination of the lock. If you give the 3 thieves a philtre each you get scripts with messages on them, take the first letter of each of these messages and you end up with DPE, this is the combination to the locked door.

Keeping the scroll (the one from Skar), drop your other objects on the tables so as to stop the wheels at DPE. Now go through the door with the scroll. You will now be in a room with a message 8 ROWS AND BAR FOR KEY FIND SKAR and 8 other doors. Only one of the doors will lead to another row (row B) the rest take you outside of that room. To decide which door to go through you must solve the clue 225, which means 2 to the power of 25. This gives you the answer 33554432. Counting from the left, go through the third door into the next row and then through the third door from the left again and so on until you have been through all 8 rows. Now use the scroll to unlock the locked door. Go through this and you will be in another room with a combination lock. Drop objects on the tables to stop the combination at OAK. Now go through the locked door with the razor which is lying just outside the locked door and offer it to Loeg. He will be freed and will give you the L key in exchange. To finish the game go to Claw Lane and open the locked door which leads from Dun Darach and you will see the marvellous end effect.**

Some of the clues given in *Dun Darach* are a bit obscure but if you are still mystified as to their meaning then read on.

ART IN ORDER — Go round all the deposit rooms writing down their numbers and the letter on the wall inside the building. Once you have done this then write down the numbers with their corresponding letters and a message will evolve, BY ALCHEMIST COUNTER PT IS KEY. This refers to an invisible door that is by the Alchemist's counter, it can be unlocked with Platinum. Inside is the shield Parthol.

RATS ARE VEIN — this refers to the statue of the rat needed to free Teth. In the original version of *Dun Darach* (there are two) there was a mirror but this was changed to a pearl to avoid confusion.

SKARS A PEARL — this is refering to the fact that the pearl can be traded with Skar.

GODS SEE ALL — this refers to the Telestone.

FINDERS KEEPERS

These tips for one of Mastertronic's better games were sent in by C Ferguson **of Bournemouth and they d platform game** Tony O' Brien **of Merseyside rushes to your help.**

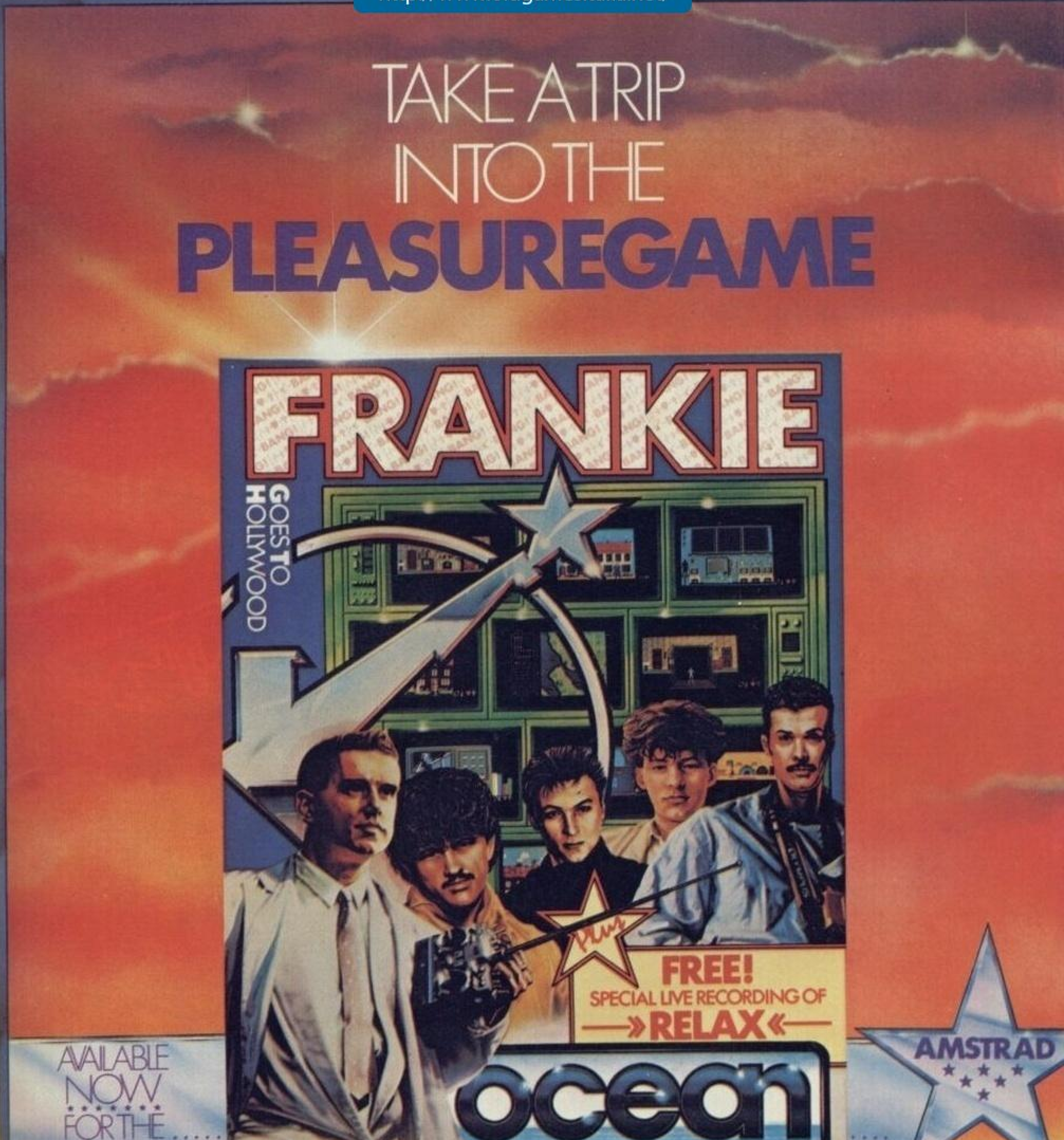
When you have the 8 sticks of the Dynamite walk up to the safe door and you will notice that it starts to glow, now move back avoiding Dr Blitzen before the door explodes. To get the plans bounce on the trampoline and jump on to the laser that is just below them. When the laser shoots across walk on on it until you are just below the plans and then jump up to get them.

Now you have to get out of the safe. To do this walk to the far end of the trampoline and make sure that you have walked so far that you are only balancing on the trampoline by one foot. After the laser has shot, bounce four times, avoiding the girl, and towards the door. You should now be free to head back to your airship and finish the game.

HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN

Here is quite a bit of the solution to the newly released *Herbert's Dummy Run* as sent in by J Wankling **of Birmingham. Next month there will a bit more help on this game plus some for *Everyones's a Wally*.**

First of all, get the box key and get the honey pot. Now go to the room that you start off in and jump up on to the box. This will spring you up to where you can exchange the honey pot for the teddy.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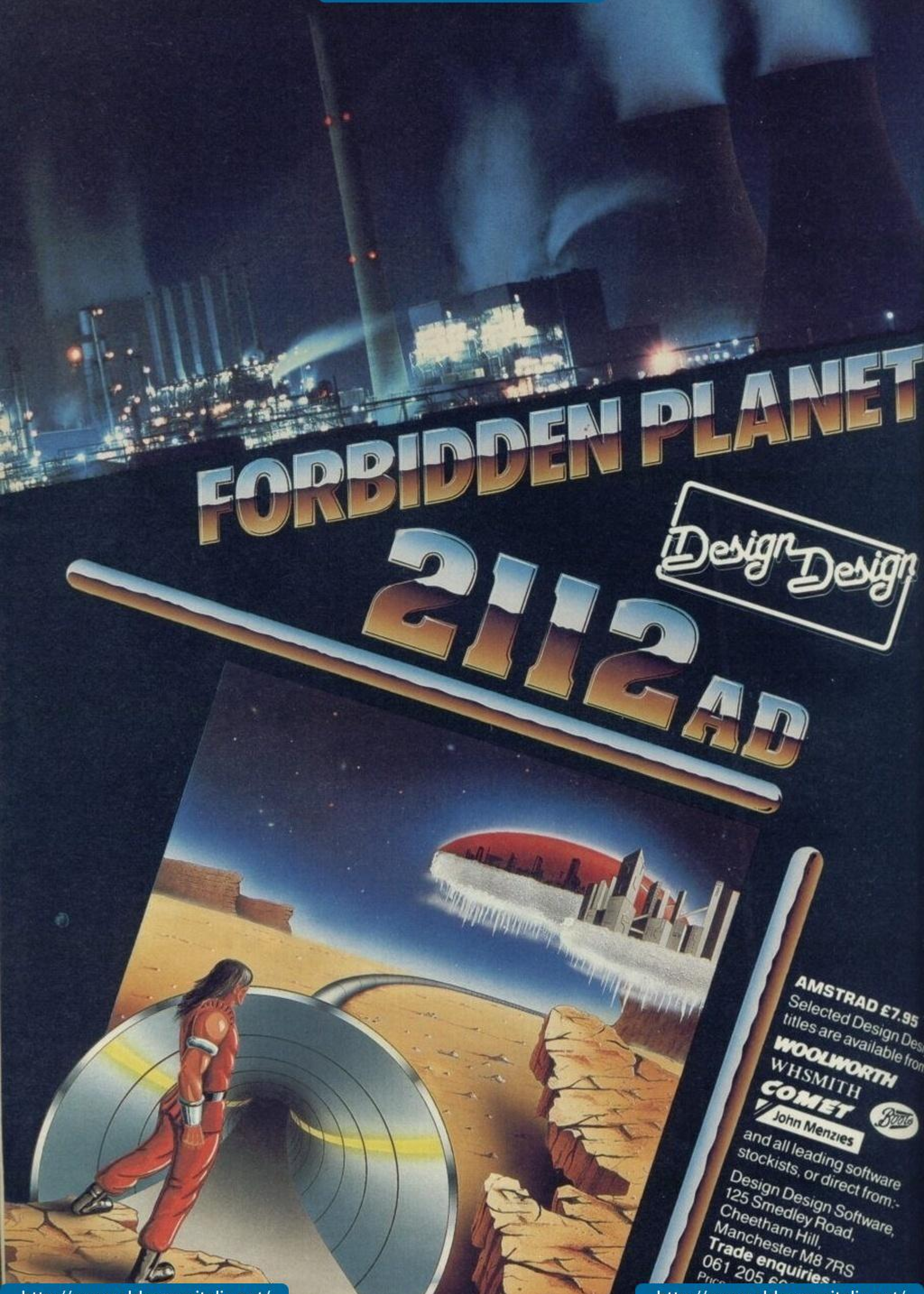
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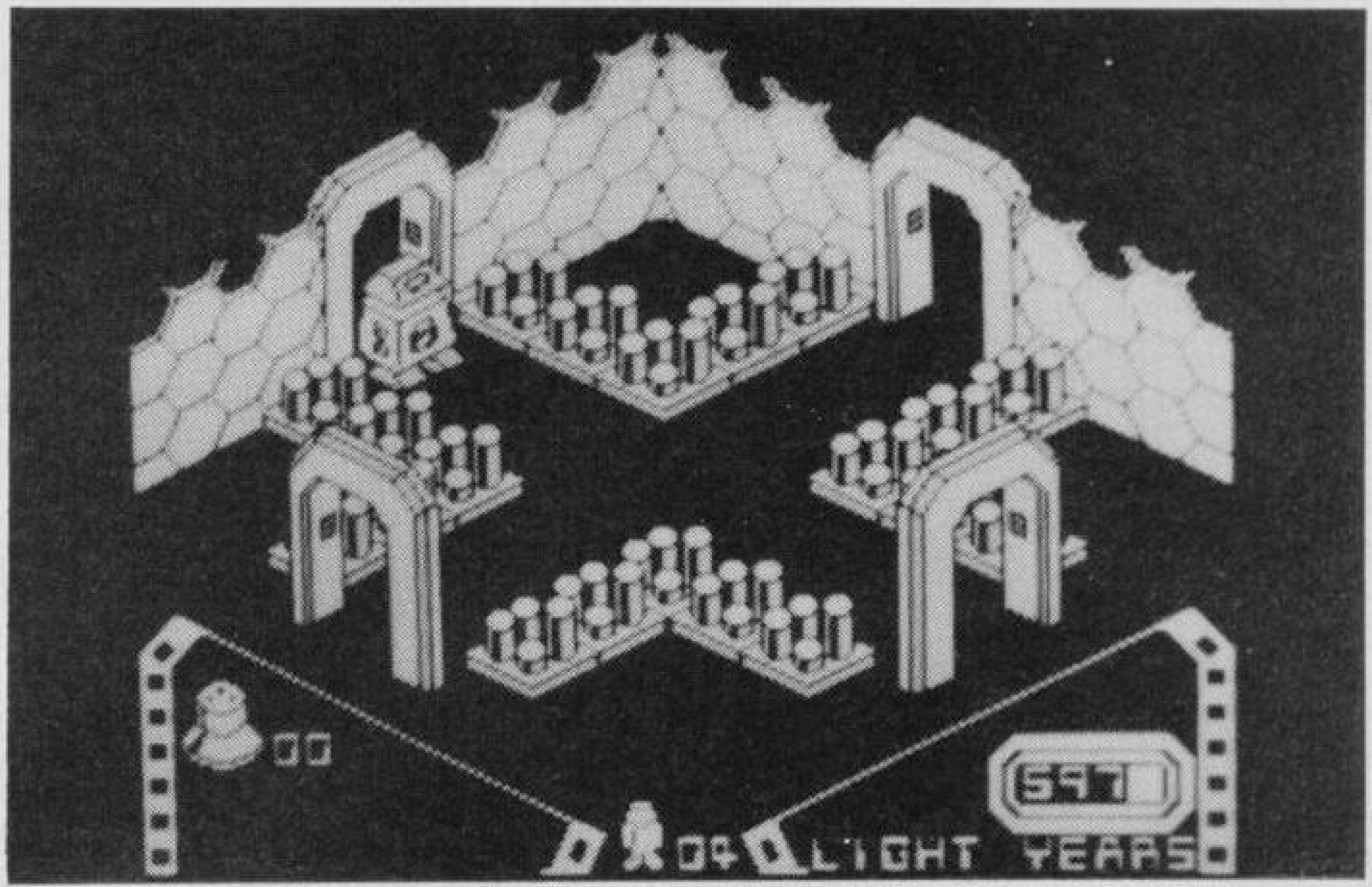
Get the rope. Now with the rope and the teddy go to the arcade room with the daleks in it. The teddy will go and open the right hand side door; you can now go through this. Jump at the rope in the next room and it should extend into a room with a rubber duck; collect this. Load the pop gun (with the cork and the pop gun) and go to the castle. Exchange the pop gun for the flag and with the rubber duck go to the seaside screen. You can now collect the pebbles to load the catapult . . .



ALIEN 8

Thanks go to Pete of Bedminster for this programmlet. Just type in the list and play your *Alien 8* tape from the start. Before running, save the program to tape for future use.

```
10 OPENOUT "d"
20 MEMORY & 10FF
30 LOAD "!", &1100
40 POKE &1101, &0: POKE &1102, &0: POKE &1103, &0: POKE &1128, &14: POKE &113E, &31: POKE &113F, &FF: POKE &1140, &BF
50 CALL &1100
60 LOAD "!", &2000
70 POKE &418E, &0
80 POKE &315E, enter the number of chambers here.
90 POKE &2EF2, &0
100 CALL &113E
```

DEFEND OR DIE

This game is probably the best Defender type on the Amstrad and generally speaking it isn't a bad version. If you are having trouble playing it then this poke may help you. It was sent in by G. Whitefoot of Bewdley.

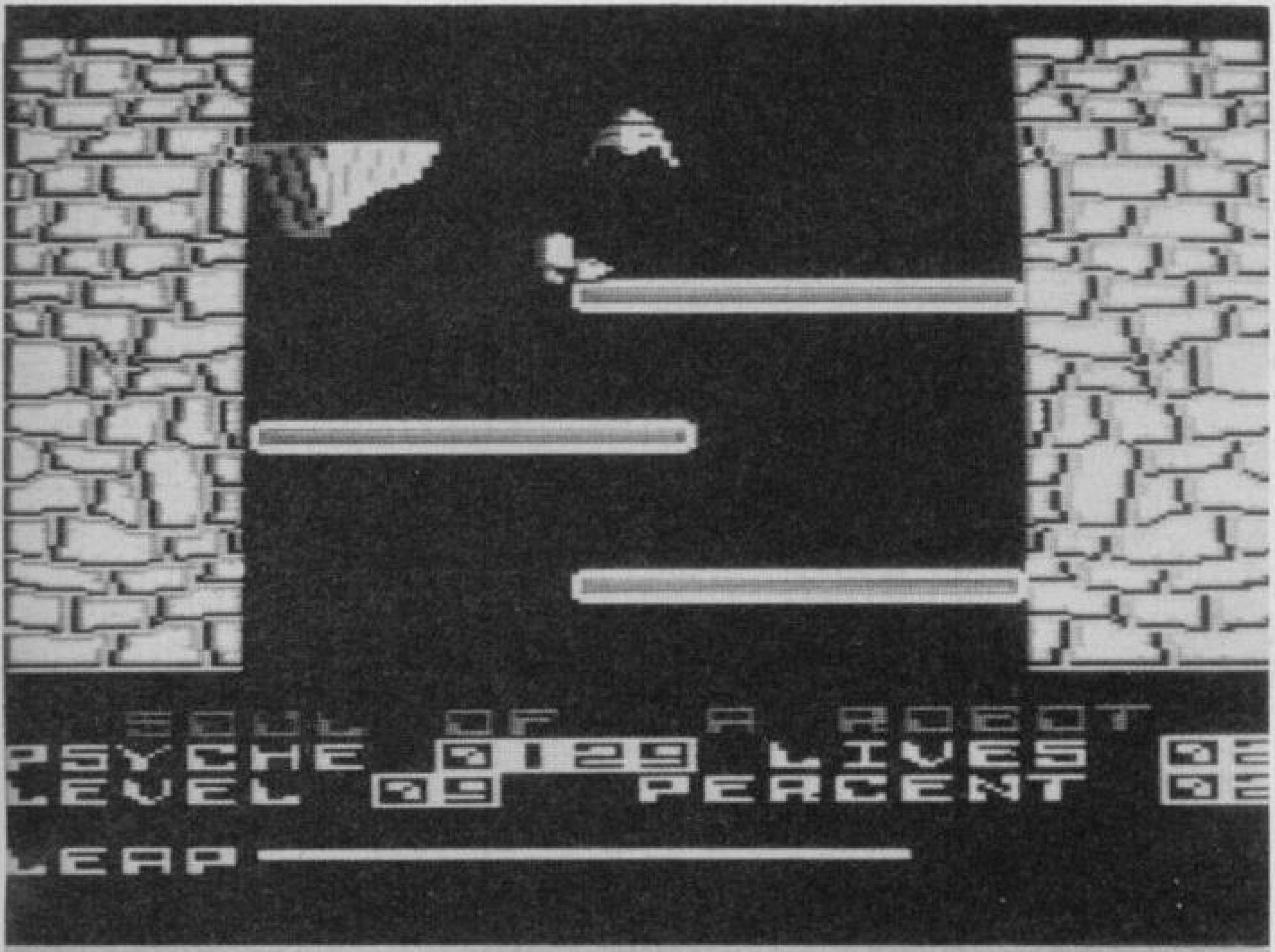
```
10 MEMORY &3FFF
20 LOAD "Defendor Die"
30 POKE &64E4, &99
40 POKE &64E9, &99
100 CALL &4025
```

POKES CORNER

After last month's plea quite a few of you have responded with a reasonable set of pokes but I've got the feeling that these have already appeared elsewhere, so no T shirt winners this month.

That seems to be it for the Christmas issue! Keep the tips coming and remember to sign your name and address on your letter (some people do forget) and please print them clearly because I can't read some of the scrawl that you jot down. Send all your tips, info and pokes to:

ROBIN CANDY, AMTIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE.

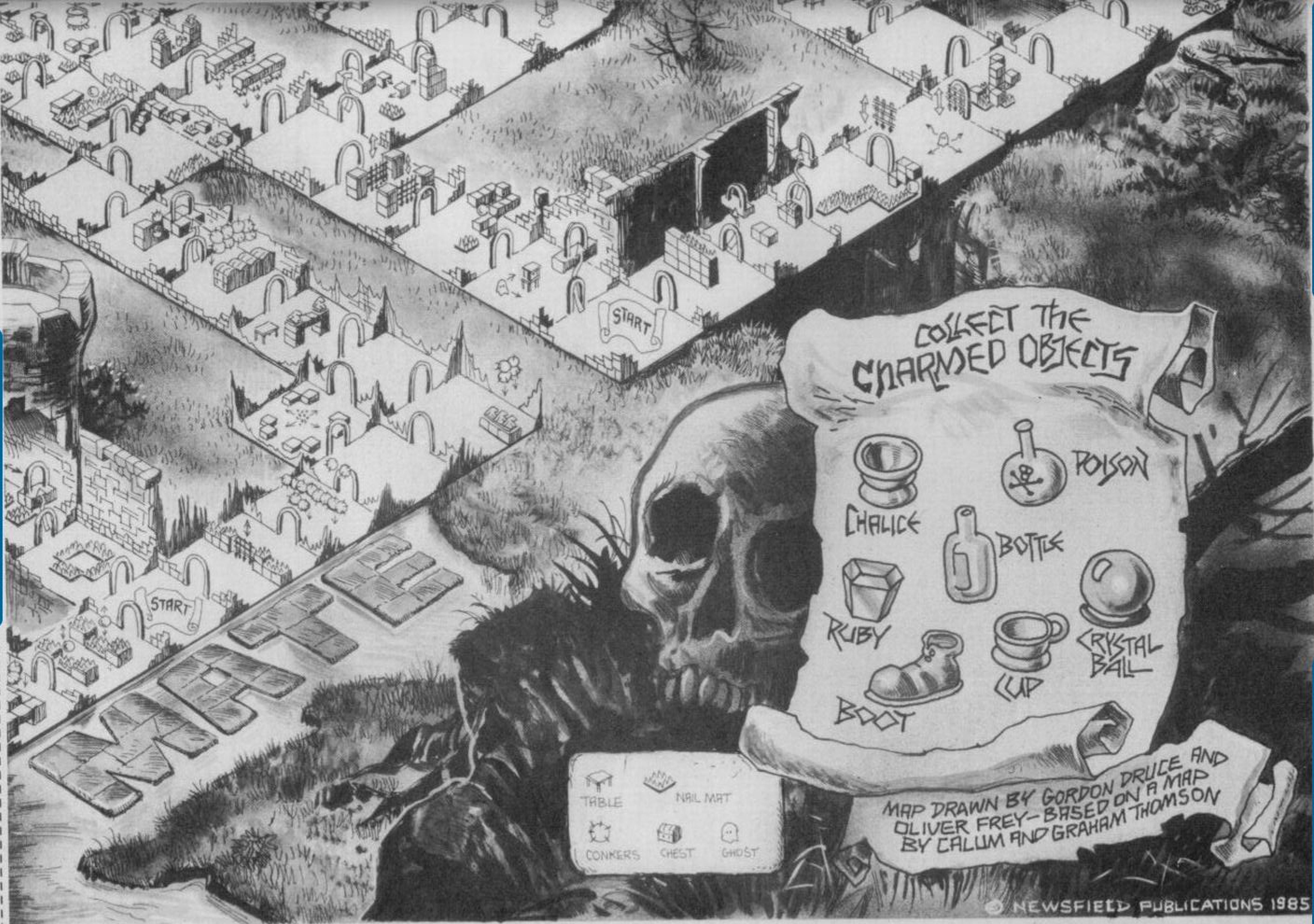


SOUL OF THE ROBOT

I wasn't really impressed with this game or its predecessor, *Nonterraqueous* but if you're wondering how to complete it, then read on because M. Norman of Plymouth has kindly sent in some tips.

To complete the game you must travel through three levels. In order to get to each level you must get a transporter key and take it to the transporter room but this is no easy task because the route to the transporter keys is usuall blocked by some kind of barrier. To get past these you must collect barrier keys; there are two of these on level one and you must collect both of them lest you become trapped on level two. A good idea at the start of the game is to collect the gun and boost your psyche up to about 500 points. Once you have completed the previous tasks you should find level three quite easy.

CUT ALONG LINES AND JOIN TO PART ONE OF M


MAP
START
START
COLLECT THE CHARMED OBJECTS
POISON
CHALICE
BOTTLE
RUBY
CRYSTAL BALL
CUP
BOOT
TABLE
NAIL MAT
CONKERS
CHEST
GHOST

MAP DRAWN BY GORDON DRUCE AND OLIVER FREY—BASED ON A MAP BY CALUM AND GRAHAM THOMSON

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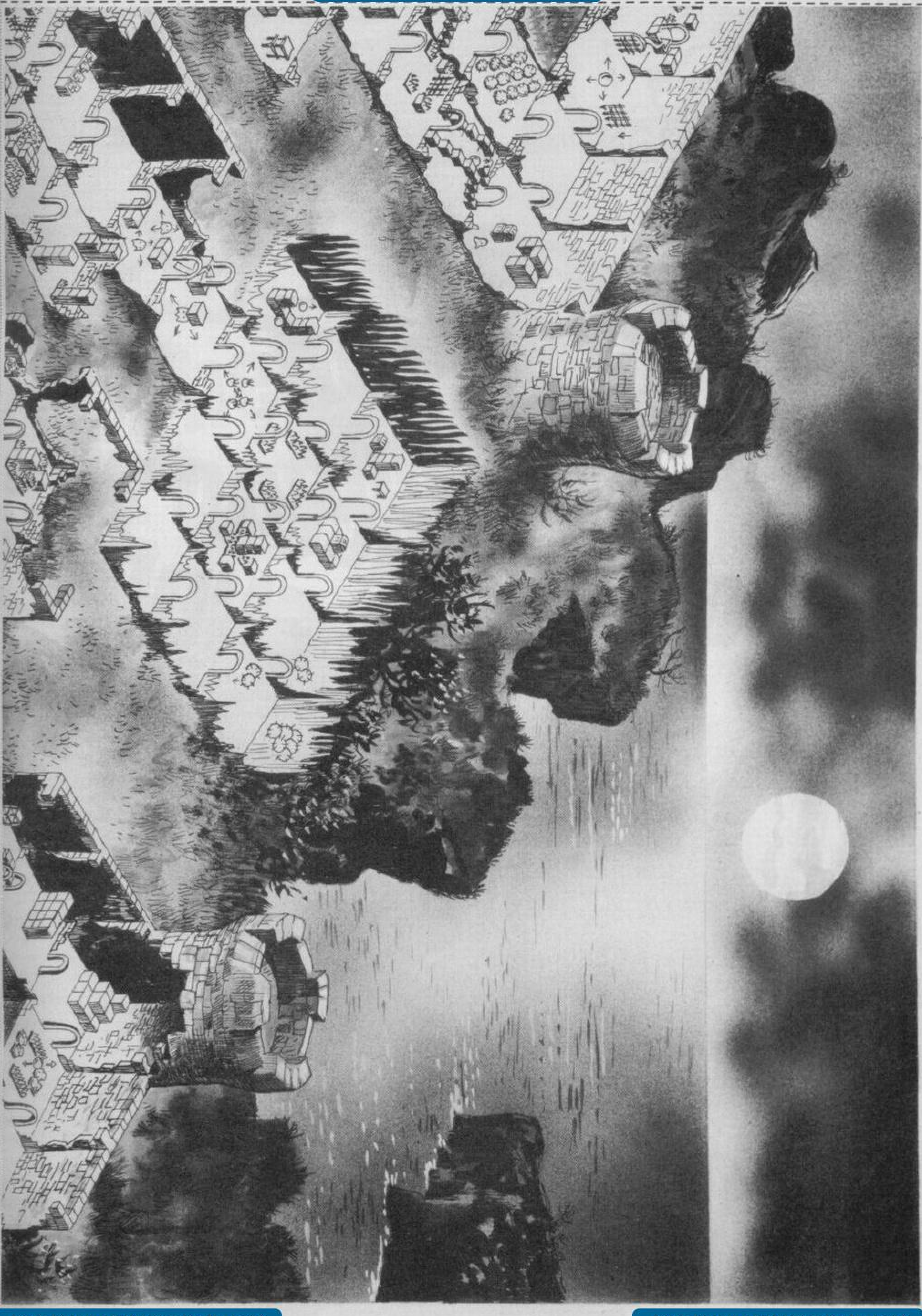

AMTIX! COMPETITION

Your chance to win in CRL's ENDURA

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To mark the launch of *Endurance*, CRL are going to give away a Toshiba RT7025 portable Radio cassette recorder, which has detachable speakers and a graphic equaliser on board. Not a bad first prizipoos, eh? Twenty five copies of the game itself are also up for grabs, so don't get too disappointed if you send in an all-correct answer to the five questions we're asking and it isn't first out of the motorbike helmet on the day of drawing.

The game itself proves quite addictive — a certain member of the AMTIX! team remained in the office one evening, long after everyone else had left for home, the chip shop or pub. “I'm not stopping until I win”, quoth Gaz Sumpter, as we left him to it. So be warned. It's a Game Sumpter Leaves the Pub For, so can't be bad, eh?

1) Where are the TT races held?

2) Name two famous British Motorbike Racing circuits

3) What exactly does CRL stand for?

4) What is a Speedway track usually made of?

5) In which country were the following motorbike manufacturers first established?
a) Honda
b) Motor Guzzi
c) BMW
d) Harley Davidson
e) BSA

Jot the answers to the following questions onto the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and get your entry in to AMTIX! ENDURANCE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January 1986 and you could be listening to a lot more music in 1986!

Send Busby your bits courtesy of CIRCUIT HOLDINGS when you win one of

SIX SUPER MODEMS IN AGGIE'S CHRISTMAS COMP!

Yes this is the Comp that mail order's Auntie Aggie gets to write because she says its easier than sticking stamps down.

AMTIX! COMPETITION

It's been another of those weeks with editorial, they really are very difficult people to get on with you know. For starters they expect mail order to do everything, from sorting their post to answering the phone. All we get are constant moans and complaints. We only want a quiet life like any other chimp (It means Considered Highly Indispensible Mail Processor — or so I'm told). You know the sort of thing, long drawn out cup of coffee in the morning while we listen to Simon Bates and 'Our Tune', quiet chat about the events of the previous day and then slip out for a quick Banana Boat down the road.

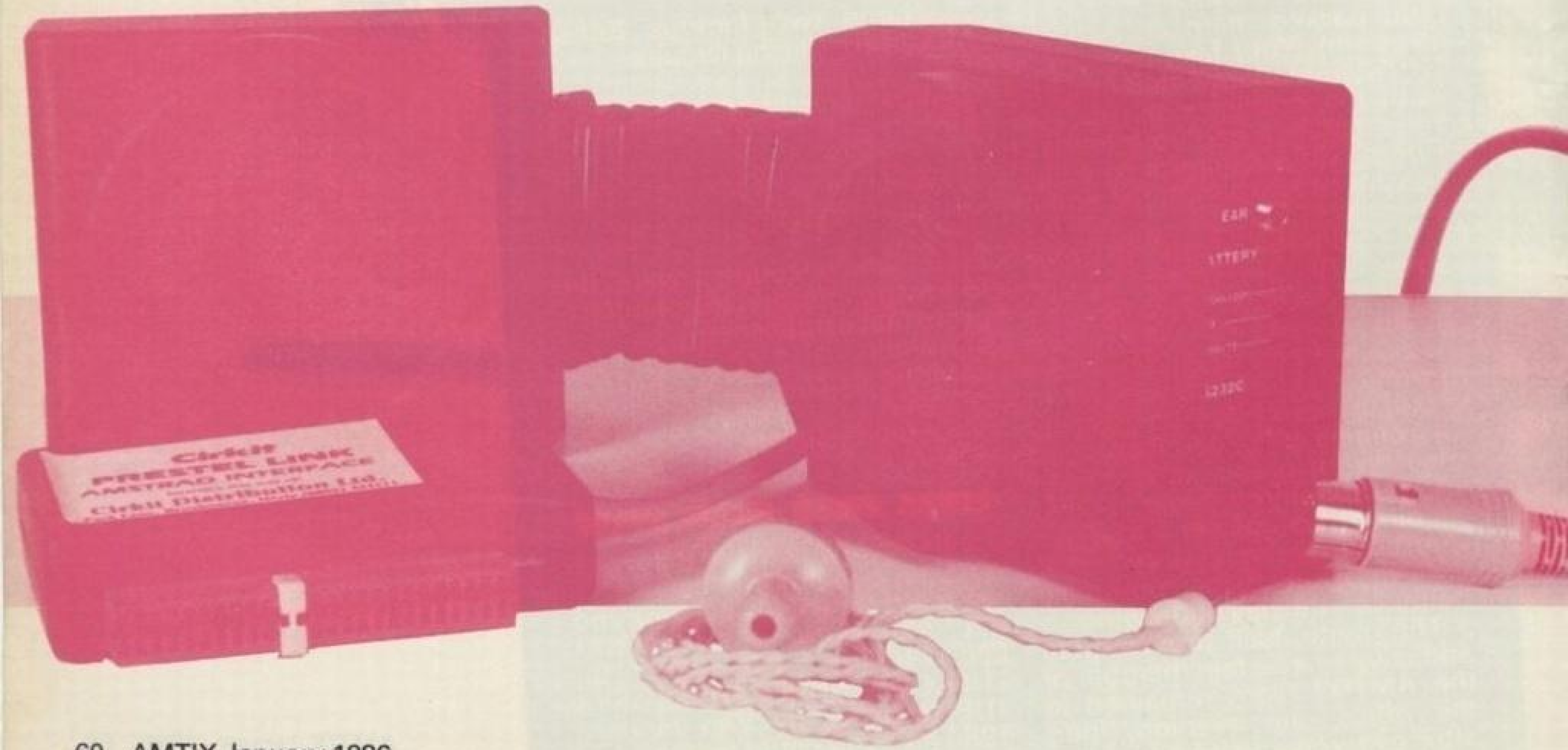
Anyway the reason I am writing this competition is because Denise in Subs and I are tired of being made fun of in the magazines. I can scarcely open a mail order form these days with seeing 'Dear Auntie Aggie please send me . . .' They know I hate that name. Now about this competition. Jeremy tells me that there are six things called acoustic modems being given away by **Circuit Holdings**. Kind of them isn't it?

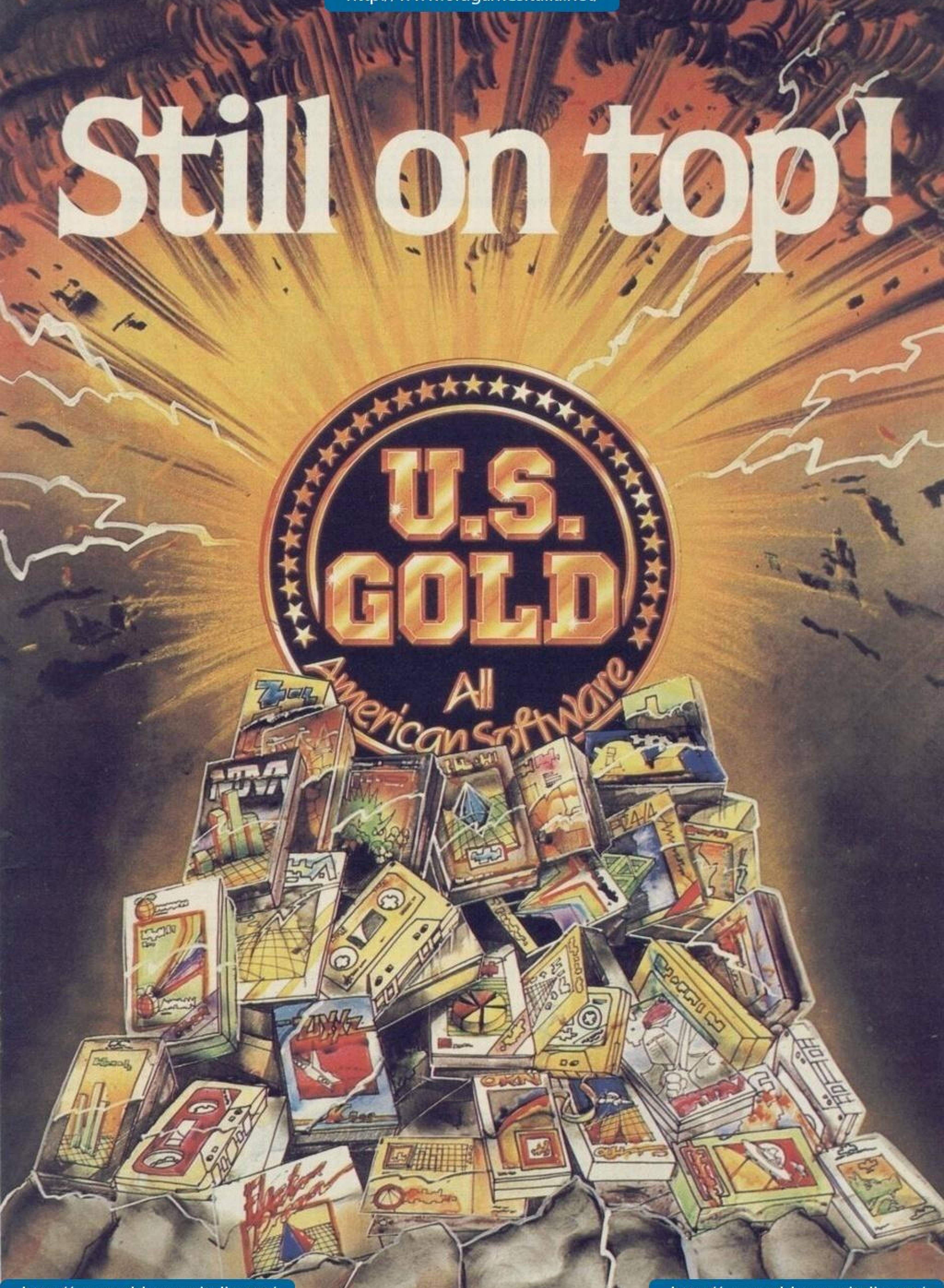
I don't quite know how the thing is meant to work but from the look of it I should say it's used for keeping your telephone warm. Jeremy says they're used to talk to other computers and if I was to read this bit about them in this issue, I would understand everything. Where he expects the time to come from to sit and read AMTIX! I'll never know. Besides which, I have to spend all day on the phone when I'm not sticking down stamps, so there's no time to put ear muffs on it — but there you go — do your own thing, I always say. Wait a minute though — if it's got its little snug-fitting ear muffs on it, I wouldn't ever have to answer it . . .

Well Aggie seems to have gone and left you nothing to do, never mind I'm sure she has told you all about the prizes — and even if she didn't we have reviewed the package in this issue. You are bound to agree that they are well worth winning, especially if you don't feel up to forking out the meagre £30 it would cost to buy one. If you want to be in the running to win a CIRCUIT HOLDINGS Acoustic Modem just answer (correctly, in the opinion of our steamy judges) the questions below.

1. In two words tell Carol what a 'MoDem' is.
2. What is cockney rhyming slang for Telephone?
4. Circuit Holdings used to make an acoustic modem for what company?
5. What baud rate would you use for Telecom Gold??

The first six correct entries drawn will make the entrants the proud owners of a Circuit Holdings modem kit. Once you have dreamed up your answers just write them on the back of a post card (or outside of a sealed envelope) and send it to us by the 30th. January 1985. Put your name and address on one side and this on the other. AGGIE'S MODEM COMP, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE. SY8 1DB — and don't worry Aggie's not on the panel of judges.

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M • A • Y

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J • U • N • E

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For all those games freaks who like to play and read about nothing but the best, U S Gold and Newsfield Publications are joining forces to help plan your way to a brighter year of Software.

In the months January to June inclusive, copies of Zzap, Crash and Amtics will contain a collectors star, as will selected games from the U S Gold range. Collect a star from each source, for each month, affix it to your calendar and you're on your way to a free, completely free, U S Gold title.

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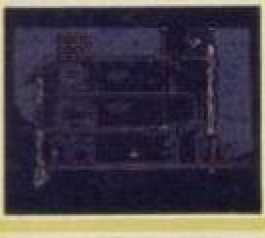
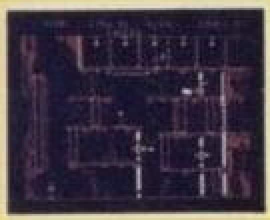

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SO YOU THINK YOU'D MAKE A CAPTION WRITER?

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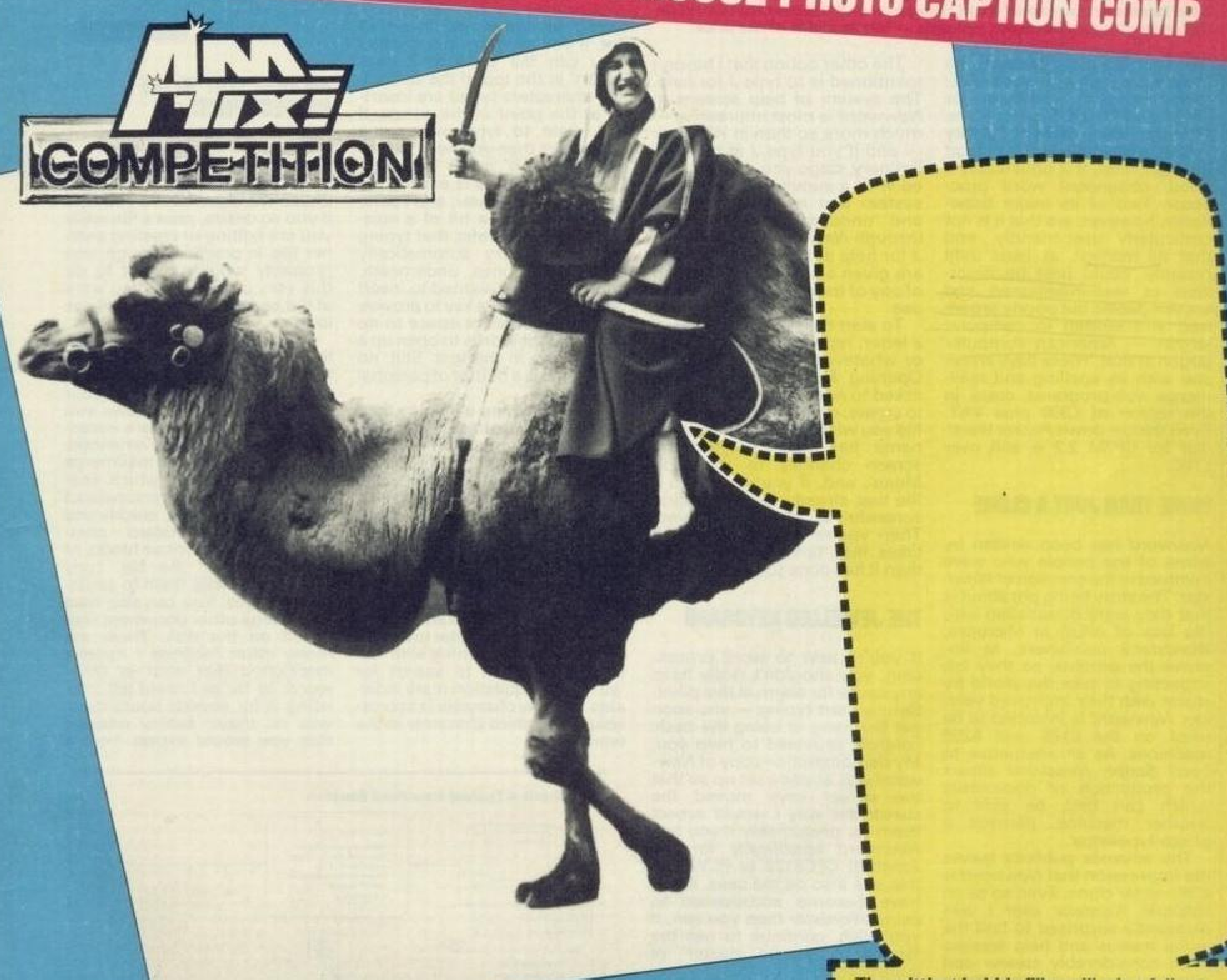


So. Now you know. When it comes to prancing around on camels, Lawrence of Arabia didn't quite corner the market. STEVE CARGILL, the programmer responsible for the fighting game that has lots of Eastern Promise, FIGHTING WARRIOR, is seen here dressed in his Mum's best curtains atop a camel. (After that BIG DADDY snap, Ms Byrne of Melbourne House had to get her own back on someone, didn't she!)

Quite where he found a camel in North London still remains a mystery, but no matter. Your faithful Competition Minion has secured a second Caption Competition from the Wonderful PAULA BYRNE of Melbourne House. This time you need to come up with a witty, pithy, snappy comment to pop into Steve's speech bubble.

And as you can see, Steve is looking suitably vicious — maybe he doesn't like camels too much? Whatever the reason for his grimacing, it's up to you to write a little scriptlet which puts words into his mouth (or bubble).

The wittiest bubble filler will win a full set of Melbourne House software for the Spectrum — and of course there are fifty copies of FIGHTING WARRIOR to be won as consolation prizes. You too could be chopping and hacking your way across the desert on a quest to save the princess who's locked away in a pyramid. And all

'ELLO STEVE, GOT A NEW CAMEL?

The wittiest bubble filler will win a full set of Melbourne House software for the Amstrad. and of course there are fifty copies of FIGHTING WARRIOR to be won as consolation prizes. You too could be chopping and hacking your way across the desert on a quest to save the princess who's locked away in a pyramid. And all for free.

Once again your Competition Minion fights his way to another whizzo competition and stitches up a deal with the striking Paula Byrne of Melbourne House.

Get your entries in to AMTIX! CAMEL COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 30th January 1986.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... **POST CODE** ....

OUT WITH THE OLD WORDSTAR IN WITH THE NEWWORD

As the undoubted re-birth of CP/M continues the quality of the software available is also increasing. Now the Amstrad 6128 and 8256 have a professional word processor and checker that could be the envy of many business systems — but at a fifth of the price.

Wordstar is almost certainly the most widely known word processing program available for CP/M and MSDOS computers. Although some of its popularity is due to having been around at the right time, it is undeniably a good, competent word processor. Two of its major drawbacks, however, are that it is not particularly user-friendly, and that its manual, at least until recently, could best be described as well-intentioned and encyclopaedic but poorly organised and written in computer jargon — American computer jargon at that. These days *Wordstar* with its spelling and mailmerge sub-programs costs in the region of £300 plus VAT. Even the cut down *Pocket Wordstar* for CP/M 2.2 is still over £100.

MORE THAN JUST A CLONE

Newword has been written by some of the people who were involved in the creation of *Wordstar*. The story being put about is that they were dissatisfied with the lack of effort at Micropro, *Wordstar*'s publishers, to improve the product, so they left expecting to take the world by storm with their improved version. *Newword* is intended to be used on the 6128 and 8256 machines. As an alternative to *Loco Script*, *Newword* allows the production of documents which can then be sent to another machine, perhaps a photo-typesetter.

The advance publicity leaves the impression that *Newword* is a *Wordstar* clone. Even so as an habitual *Wordstar* user I was pleasantly surprised to find the initial menus and help screens were considerably clearer and more comprehensive than those in *Wordstar*.

GETTING IN AND GETTING ON

On loading *Newword* a few introductory messages appear and the copyright details and serial number clear to make way for the **Opening Menu** (itself a much more sensible name than *Wordstar*'s equivalent, strangely named 'Editing No File'). The Opening Menu deals with the various file handling options; opening new files, editing files or non-document files (I'll return to this later). From here you can also copy, delete, rename or protect a document. A useful function handed down from *Wordstar* is the ability to run other CP/M programs without having to return to the operating system.

The other option that I haven't mentioned is to type J for help. The system of help screens in *Newword* is most impressive — much more so than in *Wordstar* — and if you type J at this preliminary stage you are presented with a summary of the help system that is easily readable and understandable. In fact, through *Newword* you can type J for help at any stage, and you are given a concise explanation of any of the commands you can use.

To start typing a document — a letter, report, your latest novel or whatever, you type D at the Opening Menu. You are then asked to name the file you want to create, or the already-existing file you wish to edit. Once the file name has been entered the screen changes to the 'Edit Menu', and, if you've chosen a file that already exists, the first screenful of text is displayed. Then you're in business. It all takes less time to get started than it has done to read this.

THE JEWELLED KEYBOARD

If you're new to word processing, you shouldn't really have any cause for alarm at this point. Simply start typing — you soon get the hang of using the basic controls provided to help you. My demonstration copy of *Newword* was already set up so that the cursor keys moved the cursor the way I would expect them to: presumably if you buy *Newword* specifically for the Amstrad CPC6128 or PCW8256 this will also be the case. If you have become accustomed to using *Wordstar* then you can, if you wish, continue to use the familiar 'diamond cluster' of control keys.

As you continue typing, you are almost certain to make a mistake. If you're new to using a word processor, nothing can ever replace the wonderful feeling you get when you realise for the first time that never again will you have to use Tippex or a rubber! To erase a mistyped character, press DEL: that deletes the character to the left of the cursor. To delete the character that the cursor is actually over, press the CLR key (or you can use CONTROL G). A useful feature of *Newword* that I haven't seen on other word processors is that you can 'unerase' the last character or line that you erased. The restored characters appear at the position of the cursor so you could use the command to move small blocks of text about. You can be in two different modes when typing in *Newword*: insert or not. If you're in the insert mode (you can tell because it says 'insert' at the top of the screen), any characters typed are inserted at the point of the cursor. If you want to type over some characters then you need to turn off the 'insert' mode by typing CONTROL V. This is exactly the same as in *Wordstar*, and I personally find this a bit of a nuisance. I would prefer that typing over characters automatically erased the ones underneath, and that if you wanted to insert you would press a key to provide you with sufficient space to do this, in other words to open up a visible gap in the text. Still, no doubt this is a matter of personal preference.

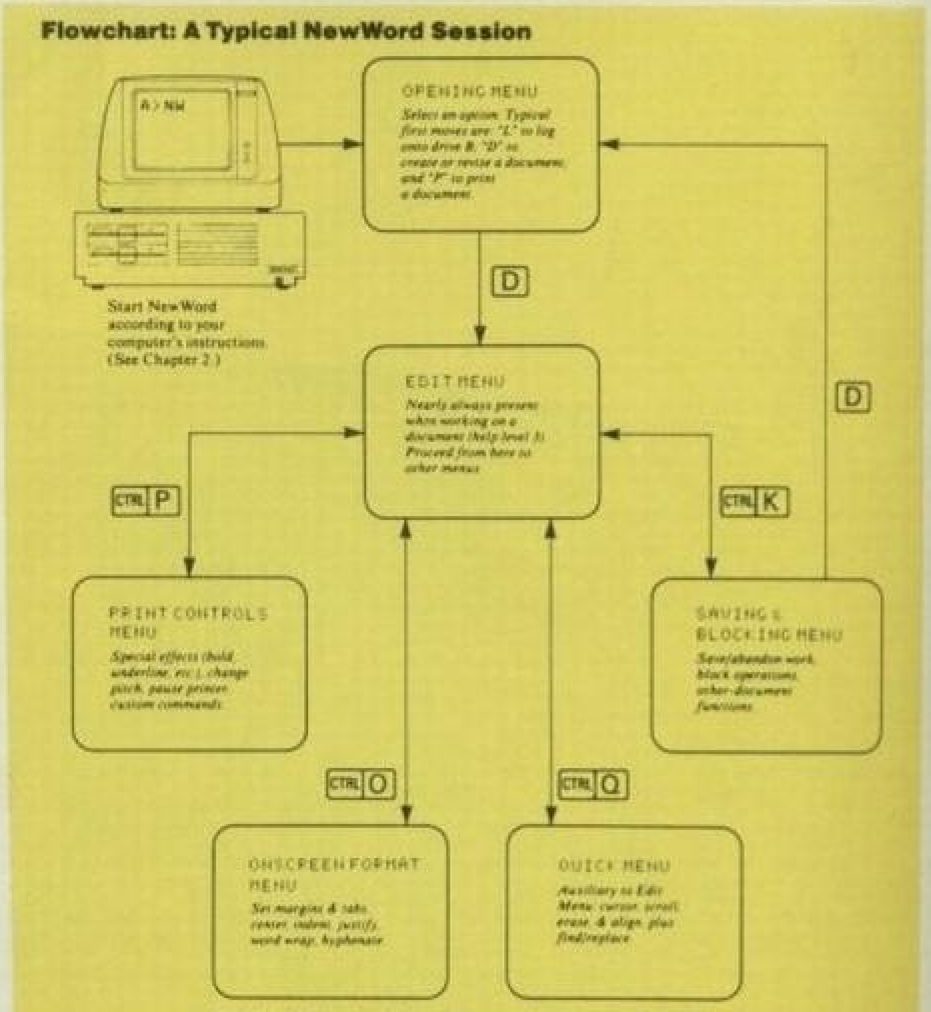
If you're typing a lengthy document, it's wise to save it to disk from time to time. CONTROL KS does this and returns the cursor to the point it was at before — an important improvement on *Wordstar*. On-screen justification can be enabled, margins can easily be altered or released, and the search-and-replace function works extremely well and very quickly. Wildcards can be employed, for example you could tell the computer to search for all words beginning with 'ad' by instructing it to search for 'ad?' — the question mark indicates that any character is acceptable as the third character in the word.

AN EASY WAY TO THE PERFECT PRINT

Printing out a file can be done only from the Opening Menu, unlike *Wordstar* where you can, if you so desire, print a file while you are editing or creating another file. In practice, though, you probably wouldn't want to do this very often unless you were at the keyboard non-stop, all day long.

Adding the usual print embellishments is easy: at any time type CONTROL P and the Print Menu appears at the top of your screen. This clearly shows you which control codes are necessary to send typeface variations, etc, to your printer. A mailmerge facility is available which enables production of personalised letters, for example, quickly and easily from standard paragraphs. You can move blocks of text around in the file, copy blocks and write them to separate disk files. You can also read and merge other document files saved on the disk. There are many other facilities I haven't mentioned that exist in *Newword*: as far as I could tell after using it for several hours there was no major facility missing that you would expect from a

Flowchart: A Typical NewWord Session


A> NW
Start NewWord according to your computer's instructions. (See Chapter 2.)
OPENING MENU
Select an option. Typical first moves are: "L" to log onto drive B, "D" to create or revise a document, and "P" to print a document.
D
EDIT MENU
Nearly always present when working on a document (help level 3). Proceed from here to other menus
CTRL P
CTRL K
D
PRINT CONTROLS MENU
Special effects (bold, underline, etc.), change pitch, pause printer, custom commands
SAVING & BLOCKING MENU
Save/abandon work, block operations, other-document functions
CTRL O
CTRL Q
ONSCREEN FORMAT MENU
Set margins & tabs, center, indent, justify, word wrap, hyphenate
QUICK MENU
Auxiliary to Edit Menu: cursor, scroll, erase, & align, plus find/replace

NewWord flowchart, showing normal sequence of operations

LETTERTECH

AMTECH LETTERS

FROM THE HUGE DESK OF JEREMY SPENCER:
Amtech is attracting its share of attention, and more than its fair share of phone calls from readers desperate for advice on a variety of topics. I'm not complaining, it's nice to hear from you. But it would be better if you could write in with the more sinister problems, so we can publish your letters together with our answers in order that other readers can benefit. After all a problem published is a problem shared is a problem ....

Also, let us know your views on the material published together with any suggestions for topics you would like to see included in Amtech. Of course if you are already a techno-wiz kid then you might have some useful hints and tips for the applications or hardware side of life, if so let us know. I am desperate to see a playing tip for Wordstar. You never know we might be so inspired we could even end up sending you a £10 software voucher for letter of the month.

Please include your telephone number when writing to Amtech, just in case we need more information than your letter contains. All letters should be addressed to AMTECH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

NEEDY REVIEWS

Dear Amtech
First let me make it plain that I am not a games person at all I have got *Code Name Mat* and *Ghostbusters* and that's about it. It was the mention of *Protext* and 'Browsing thru CP/M' that caught my eye on the cover of your first issue. Having browsed I bought.

The non-games reviews are excellent and this letter is aimed at making you realise that they are appreciated. Non-games software is so expensive to buy that sensible reviews are extremely useful. I wish I had seen one on *Amscalc* before I got it. How anyone can produce a spreadsheet without the facility to add new columns or rows is totally beyond me. (I am a user of *Visicalc* at work so that is my starting comparison). Anyway keep up the good work and see if you can sort out a good music package for me.
Derek Tatam, Oxford
PS What should we call it? serious software seems pompous.

Many thanks for the kind words Derek. To be fair to Amsoft they do point out in the documentation to Amscalc *that its facilities are limited because it was designed to be easy to use. That sounds like a poor excuse since there are packages which are much more powerful, and yet offer easy entry points for first time users — but not for the price. As to* Visicalc *urgh! it's a bit outdated now you know. If you want to try something better how about* Supercalc II *from Amsoft or even hang on for* Cracker *which includes very powerful graphics abilities. Newstar on 0277-213218 could help there. It sounds as if your games software could do with a bit of upgrading as well.*

Next issue we will be doing a feature on spreadsheets which will include such tasty packages that the MS-DOSsers will turn green.

As far as music packages are concerned we are searching the land from top to bottom for such a thing. I met a couple of chaps in the process of producing one, but it is far from finished. If anybody is aware of any progress in this area please let us know — ASAP. Anybody got any ideas on what to call 'serious software' if it sounds pompous?

RS232 TROUBLES

Dear Amtech,
Just bought AMTIX! and I would like to congratulate Newsfield on producing an excellent magazine for Amstrad owners.

I've been the owner of a 6128 for a couple of months. I bought it to replace my 16 bit Sanyo because the business software is cheaper.

My main purpose is to use it as a word processor for phototype setting because I run a printing company. I have been trying to send data via a modem using Amstrad's RS2323C but with little success. Is there anybody on your team who knows about the serial port and could advise as to how I get XON/XOFF working. I regret that I cannot get any satisfactory help from Amstrad, they are either too busy or speak to me as if I am a nuisance. My modem is an ex-GPO type and it worked well with the Sanyo. The D plug is wired 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5 with pins 8 and 20 looped at each end.
Mark Golding, Birmingham

Someone once proclaimed that very soon man would be designing computers so complicated that no one man would be able to understand them. If you doubt that will ever be true you would do well to try and find a man who understands the RS232C. I am convinced that whatever it is that it does, it does it, or it does not — and that's an end to it!

However in this case I am pleased to be able to report that it is not the RS232 that is at fault, or your wiring but the software driving the interface. The software provided on ROM in the Amstrad interface will not work XON/XOFF properly.

If you have to use XON/XOFF then use some other software to drive it. The PIP command from CP/M plus will do, once you have entered the patch program given in the back of the handbook. However if you have to use BASIC then look around for some other software, perhaps the Honeysoft interface software would suit you. To console you after such an experience with an RS232, Mark, we are sending you the £10 software voucher.

professional word processing program.

NEWWORD; A BRIGHTER STAR?

Inevitably everybody is going to compare *Newword* with *Wordstar*. Let me say right away that *Newword* is a lot better than *Wordstar*: it works in much the same way, but its visual presentation is much better: the first-time user should have no problems at all in finding his or her way about thanks largely to its very clear, understandable menus, error messages and an excellent series of help screens. Many of *Newword*'s functions are much easier to use simply because of the improved presentation. The manual (and supplement) are extremely good. The manual assumes no previous knowledge of computers, and tells you all you need in a simple, friendly way that doesn't fall into the trap of so many American self-teaching books that annoy you by their homely, folksy, all-American humour. For more advanced users, the index is good, though not brilliant, and as far as I could tell everything is explained in sufficient detail, including lots of information about installing *Newword* in the appropriate way for different kinds of printers.

To sum up, it's very good value for £69, which price includes a spell-checker that I was unable to use for this review. If you're only going to use a word processor very occasionally then *Tasword* at around the £24 mark for the Amstrad disk versions is perfectly competent and you should go for that. But if you need word processing as a major activity, especially for business users, then *Newword* is well worth serious consideration. You really do need two disk drives to do justice to all its facilities, and in any case there is little space left on the disk if you're confined to a single drive. I spend a large part of every day using a different kind of word processing program on a different machine, and I'm quite happy to do so, but *Newword* on the CPC6128 is at least as good as that.

John Fleming

THE WORD IS OUT

The spell-checker that comes with *Newword* was considered to be so special that we thought it deserved a mention on its own.

The most important part of any spelling checker is the dictionary and *The Word* scores heaps of Brownie points here with its massive 45,000 words. That's twice the size of the dictionary that we use on our Apricots. Despite the cunning data compaction techniques used, the dictionary occupies a file 136K long, so together with its subsidiary files there is only 2K of space left on a DATA formatted disk. No question about it, to use this program you are going to need two disks.

The program is subdivided into a number of COM files, each performing a different task. The most important program is invoked with **TW**. The first thing you are asked for is the name of the document you want to check and then the name of any specialised dictionary which you might have created, for legal or specialised medical terms and the like. TW then compiles a list of UNIQUE words and reports the number. The next process is to compare that list against the dictionary and then report back the unmatched words. Of course the unmatched words need not be misspelt they are just not recognised, the user has to check through the list — which is written to a separate file — word by word. The user ponders on each word as it is pulled out from the file, a correct word could be discarded from the list file and perhaps added to the update dictionary. If the word is wrong but you are unsure how to spell it you can ask the program to search for the correct version by a cuddly sounding process called *fuzzy matching.* Nine times out of ten you will be presented with the correct spelling which you accept by correcting the misspelt word. The new spelling is then added to the mismatch list. Often you come across a word that is so badly misspelt or typed you haven't a clue as to what it is intended to mean. Press **V** and the line of text containing the idiocy app ears on the screen. Again you can correct it and add the new word to the mismatch list. If you come across a word that you don't want to alter but would like to find in the text afterwards you can mark the word and find it with a search function.

Once the mismatch list has been processed and any corrections have been added you can sit back and polish Straddles while the program goes through the text file swapping all of the misspelt words for the new intelligent versions. The great advantage of this system is that if you repeatedly spell a word wrongly (ie. you really didn't know how to spell it and there's no chance of pleading 'typing error' since you misspelt it twenty times) the program will change every incorrect occurance automatically, making sure that words which had capital letters go back with capital letters. The misspelt list is an editable file so you could use the spelling checker to perform massive replace tasks on a document.

I mentioned that *The Word* has a series of subsidiary COM files. TW.COM is only one and it draws upon some of the other COM files, each of which can be used independently. For example you could search for the correct spelling of a word by entering **LOOKUP success** to which Straddles will reply *SUCCESS you fool.* Actually it doesn't really come up with the insult but I'm sure it's tempted to. Another COM file solves anagrams for you while one called FIND.COM could be used to find all four letter words beginning with 'T', or all six letter words beginning with 'S', ending with 'Y' and with an 'L' in the middle (the only one I can find in the dictionary is SILLY) — how about that for the crossword cheats? If you want to know how frequently a word is used in a document then WORDFREQ.COM produces a list of the unique words in a document together with the number of times each word was used. *Wordstar* lacks a word count facility but with *Newword* the job can be done by using the WC.COM (seems a strange way to count words).

And finally the one thing which spell-checkers, and I, have problems with are Homonyms. Words which sound alike but are spelt differently, you know the sort of thing — *meat* and *meet*. *The Word* has a separate homonym dictionary which checks through a file marking all the likely problem words. Not a perfect solution but it goes a good distance towards being one.

I have so many problems with people who don't understand my spelling that I am forced to move away from my innovative style and adopt the standard. Thus I find spelling checkers pretty useful and they find me a right pain. Personally I feel the spelling checker alone, is worth the asking price for the entire *Newword* package. My only major complaint is that it's not possible to remove words from the main dictionary, which is American after all, so it lets through Americanese words. Otherwise for the dyslexic and those lacking in manual dexterity the word is — *The Word*.

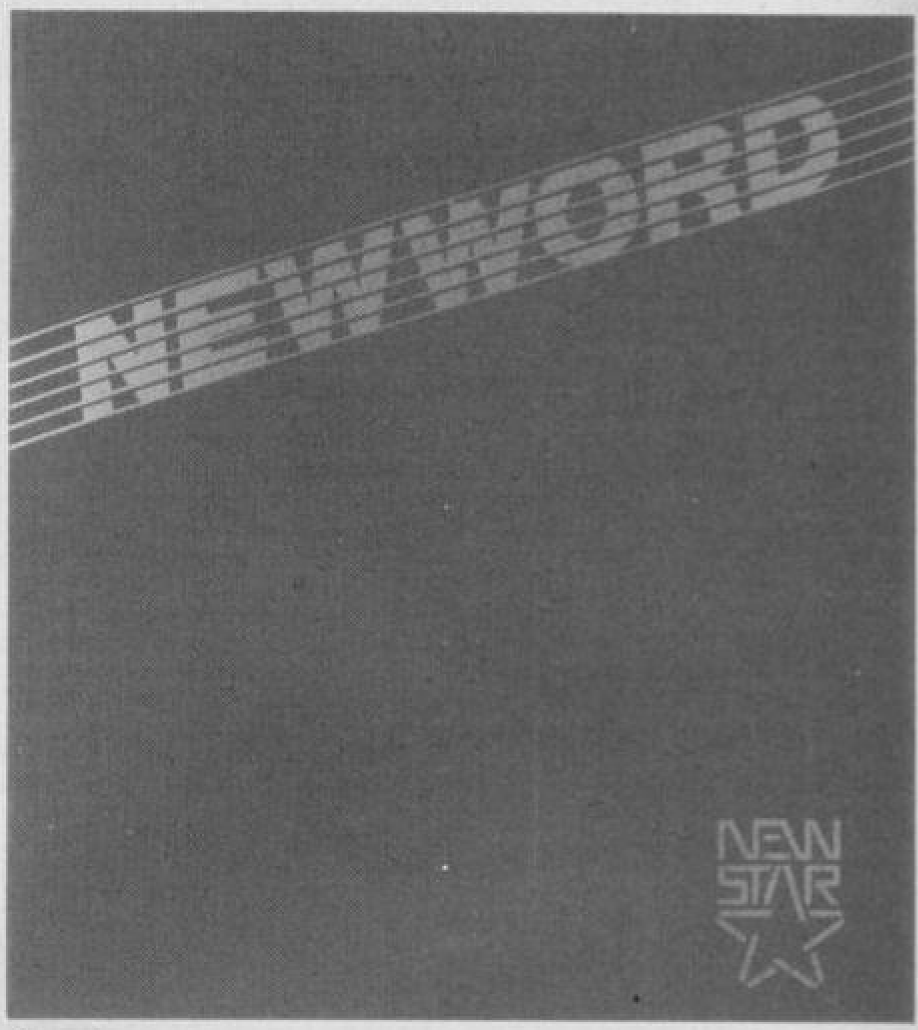
THE BIT AT THE BOTTOM

Newword is designed to run only under CP/M plus. Two disk drives are recommended but one could be used at a push. Owners of the PCW 8256 can PIP the program files to the machines RAM disk and use the drive for data.

The Word runs under either CP/M system but it is even more determined to have a whole disk to itself.

As yet *The Word* is not supplied separately.

Newword and *The Word* are published by Newstar Software Ltd, price £69 inc VAT.



MINI INTO A MAESTRO ?

There's been a good deal of cynicism surrounding the launch of the new DK'Tronics memory goodies. Their claim, that you could turn a 464 or a 664 into a 6128 has been regarded with derision by some and with expectation by others. The truth is that you cannot turn a 464 or 664 into a 6128 anymore than you can turn a Metro into a Maestro. What you can do, and what DK'Tronics have managed to do is to increase the available memory of the earlier machines to match that of the 6128 — or even exceed it if you prefer.

Sticking a few extra ROM chips on the back of a 464 to make it into a 128K machine isn't as revolutionary as you might think. After all that's exactly what Amstrad did. They added a further 64K to complete the 6128 but the additional 64K is not available to store super huge BASIC programs for the simple reason that it isn't there all of the time. The 64K is made up of 4 banks of 16K. Only one of those 'transient' banks can be seen by the firmware at any one moment. Amstrad provided a suit of programs which helps the BASIC programmer manipulate the pages, more commonly used for storing whole screens ready for superfast call up, or as a simple RAM disk for storing arrays or variables.

INSIDE OUT

DK'Tronics have put on the outside what Amstrad put on the inside. And even as exterior units they don't look out of place in their smart boxes which match the colour and the grilled designs of the Amstrad computers. The units sent to us are for the 464 computers, the next type will be for the 6128 though these will also fit on the 664 (poor 664s must feel a bit left out). Apart from the badges on top of each box proclaiming its function, the only way you will be able to tell the difference is by opening them up and counting chips. Judging by the tooling marks on the sides of the boxes we can expect to see a lot more DK'Tronics products presented in the same case.

The most important part of the whole deal is the software that is going to make these little boxes spring to life. Although the necessary code is supplied on tape DK have deliberately left it unprotected so that it can easily be located on disk. Excluding the loader the software only takes up 4K so it's pretty discreet. Once loaded you are offered the choice of locating the RSXs within a given area of memory, and pressing the enter key auto-

Thinking Software?...
...think Tasman

TASWORD 6128 The Word Processor

TASWORD 6128 utilises the additional 64K of memory in the CPC 6128. This gives text files that are over 60K long. TASWORD 6128 includes mail merge and all the other features of TASWORD 464-D. With a new notepad mode and other additional capabilities TASWORD 6128 is the most powerful of the TASWORDS.

TASWORD 6128 for the Amstrad CPC 6128 — disc **£24.95**

TASWORD 464-D The Word Processor – with Mail Merge!

This is the new TASWORD especially developed to utilise the capabilities of the CPC 464 and 664 disc drives. The additional facilities include a larger text file size and automatic on-screen disc directories during save and load operations. A major new feature is the mail merge facility. This gives multiple prints of your standard letters, forms, etc., with each copy containing, for example, a name and address automatically taken from a disc file containing the data. This data can be entered using TASWORD 464-D, or created using the Masterfile Program Extension package. A powerful and useful conditional printing facility is included – parts of a document can be printed according to user-specified criteria. TASWORD 464-D will only run on, and is only supplied on, disc.

TASWORD 464-D — disc **£24·95**

TASWORD 464 The Word Processor

"There is no better justification for buying a 464 than this program"
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY, NOVEMBER 1984

Your 464 becomes a professional standard word processor with TASWORD 464. Supplied complete with a comprehensive manual and a cassette which contains both the program and TASWORD 464 TUTOR. This teaches you word processing using TASWORD 464. Whether you have serious applications or simply want to learn about word processing, TASWORD 464 and the TUTOR make it easy and enjoyable.

TASWORD 464 — cassette **£19·95**

TASWORD UPGRADES

TASWORD 464 and Amsword owners: send your original cassette or disc (not the packaging) as proof of purchase and £13·90. Your original will be returned together with TASWORD 464-D or TASWORD 6128 on disc.

TAS-SPELL The Spelling Checker

TAS-SPELL checks the spelling of TASWORD 464-D and TASWORD 6128 text files. TAS-SPELL has a dictionary of well over twenty thousand words which are compared with the words in your text file. You can add your own specialised words to the TAS-SPELL dictionary. Please note that TAS-SPELL will only work with TASWORD 464-D and TASWORD 6128.

TAS-SPELL — disc **£16·50**
for the Amstrad CPC 464 and 664 running TASWORD 464-D and for the CPC 6128 running TASWORD 6128

TASPRINT 464 The Style Writer

A must for dot-matrix printer owners! Print your program output and listings in a choice of five impressive print styles. TASPRINT 464 utilises the graphics capabilities of dot-matrix printers to form, with a double pass of the printhead, output in a range of five fonts varying from the futuristic DATA-RUN to the hand-writing style of PALACE SCRIPT. TASPRINT 464 drives the dot-matrix printers listed below and can be used to print AMSWORD/TASWORD 464 text files. TASPRINT 464 gives your output originality and style. Completely compatible with the 664.

COMPACTA - bold and heavy, good for emphasis
DATA-RUN → A FUTURISTIC SCRIPT
LECTURA LIGHT - clean and pleasing to read
MEDIAN - a serious business-like script
PALACE SCRIPT - a distinctive flowing font

Typical Tasprint output. Please note that different makes of printer produce different sized output.

TASPRINT 464 — cassette **£9·90** disc **£12·90**

TASCOPY 464 The Screen Copier

A suite of fast machine code screen copy software for the CPC 464 and 664. Print high-resolution screen copies in black and white and also large 'shaded' copies with different dot densities for the various screen colours.

TASCOPY 464 also produces 'poster size' screen copies printed onto two or four sheets which can be cut and joined to make the poster.

TASCOPY 464 — cassette **£9·90** disc **£12·90**

TASPRINT 464 and TASCOPY 464 drive the following dot-matrix printers:

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NEC PC-8023B-N
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BROTHER HR5
DATAC PANTHER
DATAC PANTHER II
SHINWA CP-80
COSMOS-80
AMSTRAD DMP 2000

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TASWORD TWO
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All TASMAN 464 software is fully compatible with the 664 and 6128.

CP/M — ALIVE AND KICKI

This month, ROY JONES senses a turn in fortunes for CP/M, and turns his beady eye on a couple of Utilities . . . .

With the advent of MSDOS and the IBM PC with it's numerous clones, it must have seemed to the software houses that CP/M was a thing of the past, not to be bothered with any more. The tables have now turned and it looks as if old 8 bit 'user unfriendly' CP/M is about to enjoy greater popularity than ever before. The software houses are digging out their old Z80 machines again.

Micropro, the authors of the famous WORDSTAR have issued POCKET WORDSTAR — a somewhat cut down version of the old faithful, selling for slightly more than £100. They may have missed the mark a bit — it should have been about £50 — but it's a step in the right direction. HiSoft, the UK company, seem to be turning out some interesting looking language compilers and utility programs for CP/M machines at very reasonable prices, (less than £50). The indications are that over the next months we will be seeing more and more low cost CP/M packages appearing. There certainly seems to be a need.

Amstrad alone is not responsible for this revival of CP/M. The business community's mass migration to 16 bit machines is putting ever increasing numbers of second-hand and unsold 8 bit CP/M computers on the market. Machines which were selling for in excess of £1,500 can now be had for less than £500 — and this is for a new machine. Prices for 16 bit machines are also falling, but not so markedly (yet).

These factors, and the growing realization among computers users of the tremendous advantages of having a standard operating system with a huge amount of readily available software, has probably sounded the death knell for expensive 'home type' computers such as the BBC with their one-of-a-kind operating systems.

The newcomer to floppy disks does not take long to find out that these pieces of magnetic media seem to have more reproductive capabilities than rabbits. Six months of using a machine with floppies will probably see most users with a collection of 40 plus disks, all crammed with files which 'had better be kept just in case'. By this time one might start to get the feeling 'well I'm sure I must have saved it for something, ho-hum must have a look at it some day', or 'now which disk had that letter to aunt Edith'.

Findex II is a program which seems to offer a solution to the problems caused by those multiplying disks, such as lost files. *Findex II* is a disk cataloguing system. Imagine having the directory entries for all your 40 plus disks in one big directory, all nicely sorted into alpha betical order with the size of each file, the data catalogued, and a label to indicate which disk it is from. This in essence is what *Findex II* does.

The CP/M machine used to test the Findex system was a slightly weird 'home-brew' contraption with three 5.25" and two 8" drives. The 8" inch disks hold 1.2 mbytes with 192 possible directory entries. The 8" disks are mainly used for archiving material and so provided a good supply of 'test' disks with which to put *Findex II* through it's paces.

INSTALLATION

The *Findex II* distribution disk contains two versions of the program, one for winchester systems and one for floppies. Having chosen the right version it is necessary to install the program to suit your machine. On running the install program one is presented with a list of 24 computers. In most cases all that will be needed is to select AMSTRAD. The documentation includes information on how to do further (optional) program customization to provide password protection and so on, if you want to get involved in such matters.

EASY TO USE

Once installed, the program proved very easy to run — the menus are so self explanatory that referral to the manual was hardly necessary. The commands are simply menu choices, and no special control key sequences are required. If a mistake is made during data entry, editing is possible using the back step facility provided on the escape key. *Findex II* was put on a disk in drive B: the disks to be catalogued were then fed one after another into drive D:. This arrangement worked fine, and any selection of drives could have been used. It would not be very easy to run *Findex II* on a single drive system, however, unless one also had a RAM drive (as with the Amstrad PCW 8256), as an inconvenient amount of disk swopping would be needed. To use *Findex II* on the 8256 machine all that would be required would be to first copy the *Findex II* program files into the RAM disk and run it from there. When the cataloguing session was done, the catalogue data file produced would have to copied back to the *Findex* floppy for permanent storage.

To catalogue a disk, one first enters the drive to be searched and then supplies a disk identifier which can be up to four characters long, and can be any mixture of letters and numbers. This disk identifier is used in the index file to distinguish one disk from another and is also written to the disk being catalogued as a zero length file with the identifier in its name. This is a useful feature, as even if the disk label falls off or otherwise becomes unreadable, doing a DIR on the disk will show its identifier label in the directory. *Findex II* then scans the directory of the disk and places all the entries found into the Findex data file. This procedure is repeated for all the disks to be catalogued.

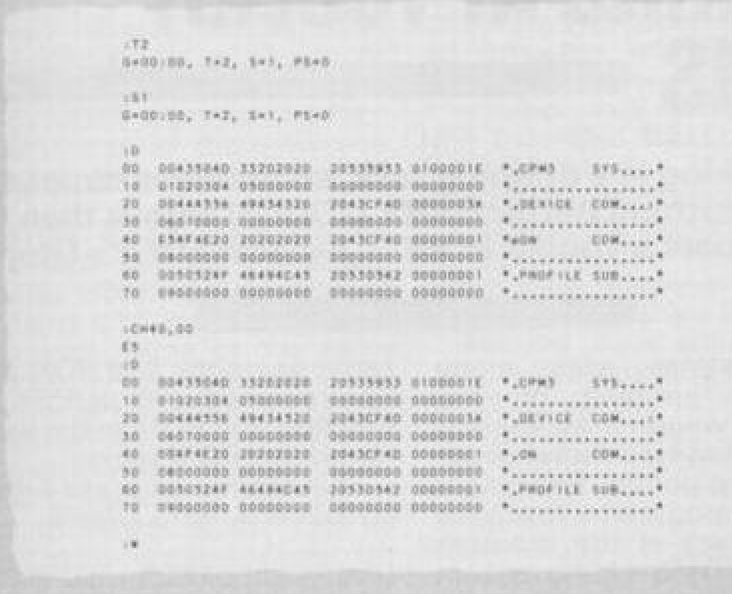
MAKING A DISK CATALOGUE

My test run used 33 of the 8" disks which were all pretty full. This produced a hefty 100k data file with some 4,400+ entries in it. Initially the entries in this file are un-sorted, being only in disk order. A sort option on the main menu is provided to sort the data file into alphabetical order. This sort routine took a few minutes to sort the file but in fairness, it was probably a lot larger than the file most users are likely to generate.

Viewing the file in its sorted form immediately showed that my 8" archive disks contain many unnecessarily duplicated files. A few items that I thought had been lost for good were also found, tucked away in some obscure user area like 12. The display of the record sizes of the files proved useful as some of the files, which were apparently just duplicates, showed up with different record sizes indicating that some investigation would be needed before erasing them as backups of backups.

The catalogue also shows the attributes of the files; whether read/write, read-only, system etc. Once the catalogue has been created and sorted, extensive search and display options are available using an expanded version of CP/M's wildcards plus search by disk identifier, file size, user number etc. All this makes it very easy to find which disk that elusive lost file is on.

Having created the catalogue, you're likely to find that there are many duplicates and unwanted files which could be erased to recover some valuable disk space. It would be rather a tedious job to go through all the disks typing ERA for each unwanted file, and to handle this problem there is an optional add-on for *Findex II* called *File-*



```
:T2
G=00:00, T=2, S=1, PS=0

:S1
G=00:00, T=2, S=1, PS=0

:D
00  0043504D 33202020  20535953 0100001E  *.CPM3    SYS....*
10  01020304 05000000  00000000 00000000  *................*
20  00444556 49434520  2043CF4D 0000003A  *.DEVICE  COM...:*
30  06070000 00000000  00000000 00000000  *................*
40  E54F4E20 20202020  2043CF4D 00000001  *eON      COM....*
50  08000000 00000000  00000000 00000000  *................*
60  0050524F 46494C45  20535542 00000001  *.PROFILE SUB....*
70  00000000 00000000  00000000 00000000  *................*

:CH40,00
E5
:D
00  0043504D 33202020  20535953 0100001E  *.CPM3    SYS....*
10  01020304 05000000  00000000 00000000  *................*
20  00444556 49434520  2043CF4D 0000003A  *.DEVICE  COM...:*
30  06070000 00000000  00000000 00000000  *................*
40  004F4E20 20202020  2043CF4D 00000001  *.ON      COM....*
50  08000000 00000000  00000000 00000000  *................*
60  0050524F 46494C45  20535542 00000001  *.PROFILE SUB....*
70  00000000 00000000  00000000 00000000  *................*

:*
```

Manager which allows unwanted files to be deleted by 'condemning them' in the main catalogue file. It is then only necessary to insert a disk with condemned files, and *File-Manager* will search out any condemned file in whatever user area and do the job for you.

Keywords is another add-on, which would be found particularly useful by people who have lots of word-processor files. With *Keywords* you can enter up to ten words or phrases to be searched for, and all the files on the disk will be searched. Files containing the key-words specified will be reported (again all user areas are searched), and if the search fails on one disk, further disks can be inserted to continue the search. *Findex II* (£29.25), *Filmanager* (£14.95) and *Keywords* (£14.95) are available from **Greenfire Software 'The Oare Windmill' Faversham Kent ME13 7TJ.**

The DISK UTILITY (DU to its friends)

Like *Sweep* mentioned last month *DU* is among the best known and most useful of programs from the public domain. As with many of the best utility programs *DU* has been developed over a period of time — the latest version, 8.6, works with CP/M 2.2 or CP/M 3. *DU* is a disk editor, that allows any sector on any track to be viewed on the screen and optionally altered.

DU does not need to be specially set up for any particular machine — it gleans the information it needs about the type of disk format in use by looking at the disk configuration areas in the operating system, learning how many sectors and tracks the system employs. *DU* has many possible uses; probably the most common application is where one has accidentally erased a file only to realize that this was not really what you wanted to do. When CP/M erases a file it is not physically removed from the disk. All that happens is that the first character of the directory entry for that filename has been changed to the HEX character E5, and providing nothing else has been put on the disk since then to overwrite the file, then it is a simple matter to recover it.

RECOVERING FILES

The print out shows a typical file recovery session. The first task is to find the directory area on the disk: this should not be a problem as it will be on the beginning of the next track after the system track(s) and this information can be derived by typing **STAT DSK:** or with CP/M 3 **SHOW DSK:**. The tracks are numbered from zero, so if your system has 2 reserved tracks (2 is the most common) then your directory will be found on track 2 sector 1. The *DU* prompt is a ":" (colon) and to display the contents of the first sector, enter the first command, **T2** meaning go to track 2, then **S1** 'go to sector 1', then **D** meaning dump to the screen.

The left side of the display is the contents of the sector in HEX format and the right side shows it in ASCII format. The file to be recovered is ON.COM — this is the third entry down. On the right you will see 'e' just in front of ON, and on the left, next to 40, the HEX E5. Notice that the other directory entries begin with 00 — this indicates that the file is in user area zero. Had this had been 01 it would mean the file was in user area one and 02 for user area two and so on.

The next command given is **CH40**, meaning Change Hex format address 40 to 00. Now dump to the screen again, to make sure we got it right (at this stage the change has not yet been written to the disk) and having observed that our disk editing has produced the desired result, the process is finished off with the **W** (write) command to write the edited material to disk. The file ON.COM will now be back on the directory.

Sometimes more serious mishaps can occur, resulting in the loss or corruption of the directory track. With *DU* it's possible to recover a file from the disk even if the directory is unreadable. *DU* has a facility to read sectors from any position on the disk, store the information in RAM and then save it on another disk as a file. This procedure by-passes the normal directory process, and means you have look on the disk to find the starting and finishing sectors of the file to be recovered. The number of sectors which can be recovered in one go is limited to about 300 due to RAM space limitations. Files larger than about 36k will probably need to be recovered in two or three chunks.

EDITING PROGRAM FILES ON DISK

Another handy use for *DU* is when minor modifications to a program file are needed, where maybe just one or two bytes to be changed. DU has a very useful 'FIND' facility to help us with this. The DU command = <**B**><**B**>, will search the disk from the current sector for the first occurrence of the byte specified by 'B'. As an example of this I recently had to configure a program to run on my computer, which had no special install program with it to reconfigure the software. My computer uses the HEX codes 1B 3D to position the cursor on the screen and I knew that previously the program had been set up to run on a machine which used the codes 1B 59 for this. Entering the *DU* command = <**1B**>=<**59**> soon located the configuration data storage area in the program, which I was the able to edit as required. Beware though, these codes could have occurred at various other points in the program and choosing the wrong one to edit would have very likely produced a totally non-functional piece of software.

DU is available on SIG/M library volume 152, and a Tutorial is available on SIG/M volume 161. If you have MSDOS, a similar program called ULTRA utilities is available on PC-BLUE volume 57. Copies of these disk volumes can be had for £2.00 per volume from: **The P.D. Software Library, 138 Holtye Rd, East Grinstead, Sussex RH19 3EA. Tel: (0342) 313883 (Note: You have to supply formatted disks and stamps for return postage.)**

SIREN SOFTWARE SIREN SOFTWARE

DISKON

Put those headerless programs onto disk. DISKON gives you the power. No assemblers, dissassemblers, monitors needed. This two part program allows you to transfer headerless programs and get them running. Not recommended for the novice.

464, 664 and 6128. Disk £13.99

DISCOVERY

Transfer tape based software to disk, now handles some turboloaders. Alters programs to get them running without alteration. Adds re-locaters etc. *'I found Discovery just a bit easier to use'* AMTIX! issue 1

464,664 and 6128 Tape £7.99, Disk £11.99

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matically locates them in the highest available area. That's the last you will ever see of it until you invoke one of the RSXs by using the standard | command.

The documentation deals with each RSX in turn. Each command is explained and then demonstrated by the use of example programs which can be loaded in from the tape. The first command explained deals with saving the screen image to one of the RAM banks and calling it back again. A very simple operation which is extended to do the same for windows. Under normal circumstances Amstrad windows would obliterate the text they covered. **|SAVEW** will save a window which can be recalled with its opposite. Windows manipulated using these commands will not destroy the text they cover.

The other use the extra memory can be put to is for storing arrays. The data from these is moved around by the commands **|SAVED** and **LOADD**. The documentation explains at great length how you should go about dealing with numerical arrays, a pleasant way of preparing you for the more complicated multi-dimensioned and string arrays

PICTURES AND GRAPHICS

As stated before, the bank memory is ideal for storing away the vast amount of data the Amstrad uses to build up a screen picture. The three commands **|LOW**, **|HIGH** and **|SWAP** allow whole screens to be moved from memory and displayed instantly. While one screen is being displayed, the 'background' screen can be sent in from disk or even loaded out to disk. With a bit of imagination the window commands could be used to create small moving graphics characters that need not corrupt the background when they are moved from one position to the next.

The more adventurous among us will want to experiment with the possibilities that the memory boards allow for programming at higher levels. For example there are special PEEKS and POKES which can examine and write value in any of the banks. For the really cool dudes who understand machine code programming DK have not forgotten you, They have included an extensive section detailing how to manipulate the memory areas without using RSXs.

CP/M AND COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

We have received a great number of phone calls concerning the suitability of a 464 or 664 equiped with a RAM board for running commercial 6128 software. This is a bit of a tough one chaps.

Although the memory can be made to act like a 6128, the rest of the firmware cannot. Some programs may attempt to examine the ROM type before they load. CP/M plus will report that it cannot run in that environment if it finds anything other than a 6128 ROM. Although DK have managed to get around that particular call by providing an emulate command there may be times when even CP/M programs make firmware calls that, strictly speaking, they shouldn't.

DK'Tronics have tested some of the more popular applications such as the new larger Tasword and Masterfile, and have found them to work. This has been my own experience. I went a bit further and decided that I would like to try Sorcim's Superwriter. This is a memory hungry word-processor that wouldn't even look at a TPA of less than 50K. The short answer is that although I could get CP/M plus to boot up into the 464 and the 664, only the 664 would run Superwriter, even then only for a short time before it turned nasty. Now that does not mean that CP/M plus will not run, far from it, I haven't found a utility yet that doesn't and Newword seemed pretty happy when I tried it. The problem is going to be knowing which programs you should buy and which to avoid.

Bearing in mind the number of people who have been out and bought CP/M plus to run on their new configuration it would seem sensible that we should draw on our readers' combined experiences. Let us know at Amtech about your successes and you failures, so that we can keep a log of software which is likely to cause problems and that which is not. This applies equally to games software if and when it becomes available purely for the 6128. After all, there can be little doubt that a lot of readers will want to upgrade their Amstrads so we will try to keep you informed about any potential problem areas if the crop up.

Prices: 64K £49.95 and 256K £99.95

LOOKING AT TOOLKIT ROMS

Tea drinking is a draining task, so between cuppas, there's nothing better GARY LIDDON enjoys than taking apart a Toolkit ROM — especially if it's Utopia.

This Christmas sees many companies jumping on the ROMboard wagon in an attempt to part hard earned shekels from the innocent punter. Seemingly popular among many firmware manufacturers at the moment are toolkit ROMS adding extensions to the already powerful Locomotive BASIC resident within your Amstrad. Three such ROMs have gently wafted their way onto my desk over the last month or so, all trying to achieve similar goals. They are Arnor's *Utopia*, Beebugsoft's *Toolkit* and Superpower's *Programmer's Toolbox*. Though priced over quite a wide range, what you actaully get for your money varies quite a lot.

The cheapest two, *Toolkit* at £29.95 and *Toolbox* at £39.95, come as EPROMs with no method of attaching them to your machine supplied. Admittedly, anyone likely to buy such a ROM is likely to already have purchased an external ROM-board but if you aren't lucky enough to own such an item, the extra hardware to plug the chips into your computer will cost anywhere between £30 and £50. Arnor's *Utopia*, however, comes supplied with the a small board that fits neatly inside the Amstrad's casing. Depsite the slightly higher price of £42.50, Arnor's offering probably works out the best value because of its included ROMcard and fitting instructions.

All three pieces of firmware are 16K long and work in a similar way. Each one is a background ROM. Generally this means that they perform services for foreground ROMs such as BASIC. When any of the ROMs are activated they don't take full control of the machine but just perform a function and the return control to the foreground ROM that asked for the command.

Upon power up each individual ROM proclaims itself to the system and tells it about any extra functions it's willing to perform. The extensions are known as resident system extentions (RSXs) and are accesed by typing the bar character (|) and the command you want to access. When such a command is issued each ROM is interrogated to see whether it possesses the command needed and if it does then the ROM performs the function asked and then returns control to BASIC. Because of this system, if two ROMs hold a command of the same name the first ROM to be interrorgated will perform the function, the ROM in the lowest numbered ROM socket.

This month, let's take a detailed look at Arnor's *Utopia*.

Utopia supplies an extra of 43 commands all as RSXs. As a little extra it also programs the function keys to handy commands when used in conjunction with the CTRL key. 12 of *Utopia*'s extensions are of a disk only nature, so they're a bit of a dead loss for cassette users. If a cassette based machine is asked to do something with a disk drive that's not connected then the ROM offers an 'AMSDOS' not initialised error message. The disk commands added are very powerful indeed. A sector editor is even supplied allowing the user complete control over an Amstrad disk drive. The annoying original bug in the REN and ERA commands on the 464 have been corrected. Now you can type |ERA,'FILE' instead of bunging the filename into a string and then passing the string to the command. The command will still work with the old method, so as to maintain upwards compatability with older programs. If you want *Utopia* to intercept the AMSDOS commands then it's neccessary to fit *Utopia* into a higer priority socket than the disk ROM which allocates itself on socket 7. The other disk commands are very handy indeed. **INFO** gives details of any files start, end and run address. Also included is a disk formatter and a disk backup function. All functions that should have been included in AMSDOS.

Utopia takes 256 bytes in higher memory for workspace and some games may not run as a result. For some ROMs this would mean having to physic-

FOR THE AMSTRAD CPC464, CPC664, CPC6128
TOOLKIT
Basic Programmer's Aid
BEEBUGSOFT
SUPPLIED ON EPROM

ally disconnect them from the machine in order to get some software running. *Utopia*, however, offers a much more elegant solution by suppling a the **ROMOFF** command which allows any or all the extension ROMs present to be switched out.

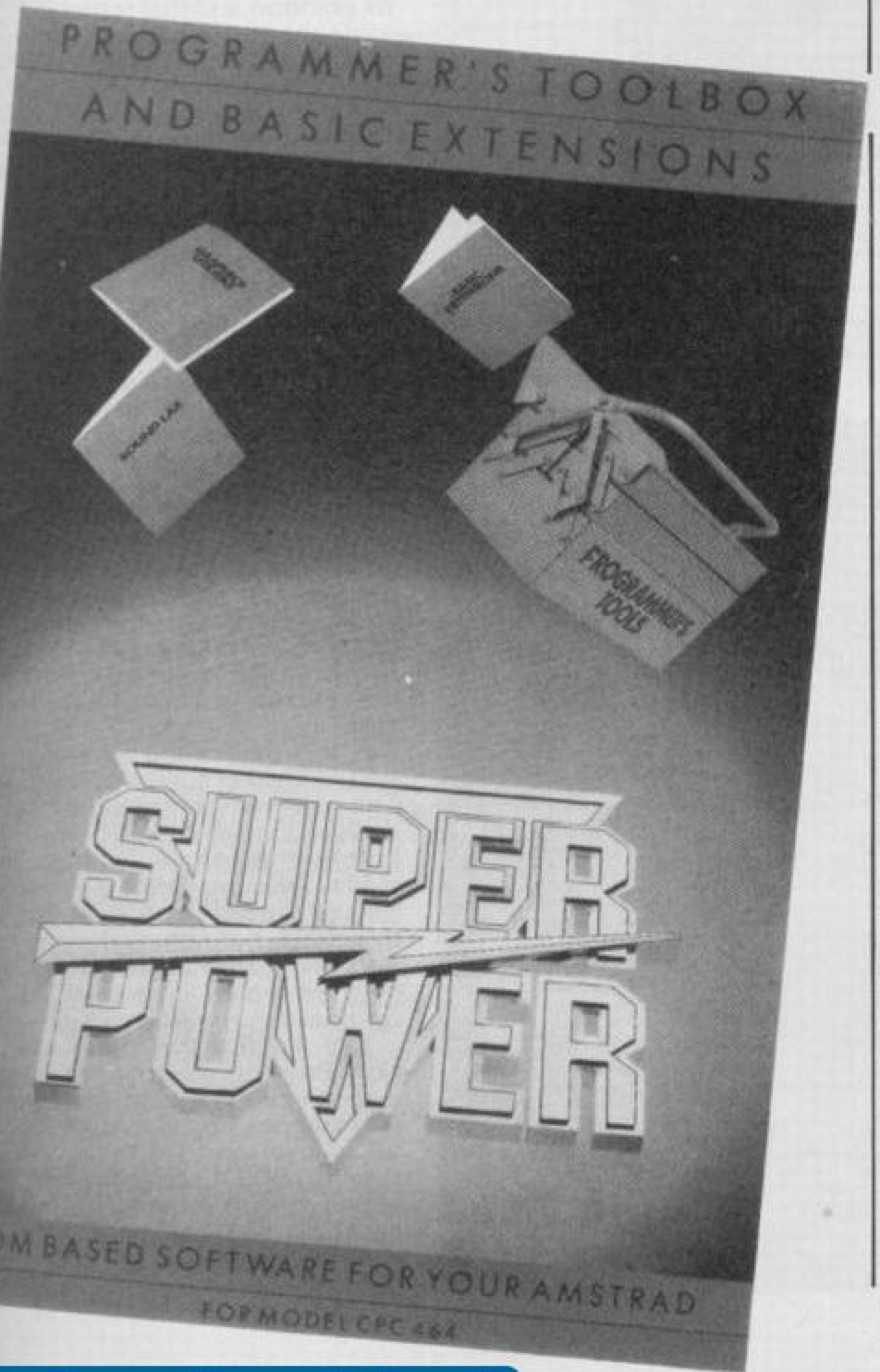
For the BASIC programmer many extra functions are provided to make the creation of programs a bit less of a painful experience. Most of the extra commands become especially useful once you start debugging a finished program. A major nightmare when writing porky BASIC programs is the task of keeping control of the various variables being used. *Utopia* can dump out all the currently defined variables, detailing their names and values. Find and replace functions are also included for use on your BASIC text allowing specific strings to be found and replaced with a substitute string. When you're running short of memory and a few more bytes would help no end it's often memory efficient to replace long variable names with a one letter equivalent. Though the resulting program is a little less readable, *Utopia* should be able to shorten a majority of BASIC programs with little difficulty.

If you know a bit about the machine and possess some sort of firmware specification with *Utopia* it's possible to utilise all the jump block commands with the extended **CALL** command. *Utopia*'s version of call allows the Z80's internal registers to be set before the call is performed. It also means that interfacing your own machine code routines with BASIC is a lot easier.

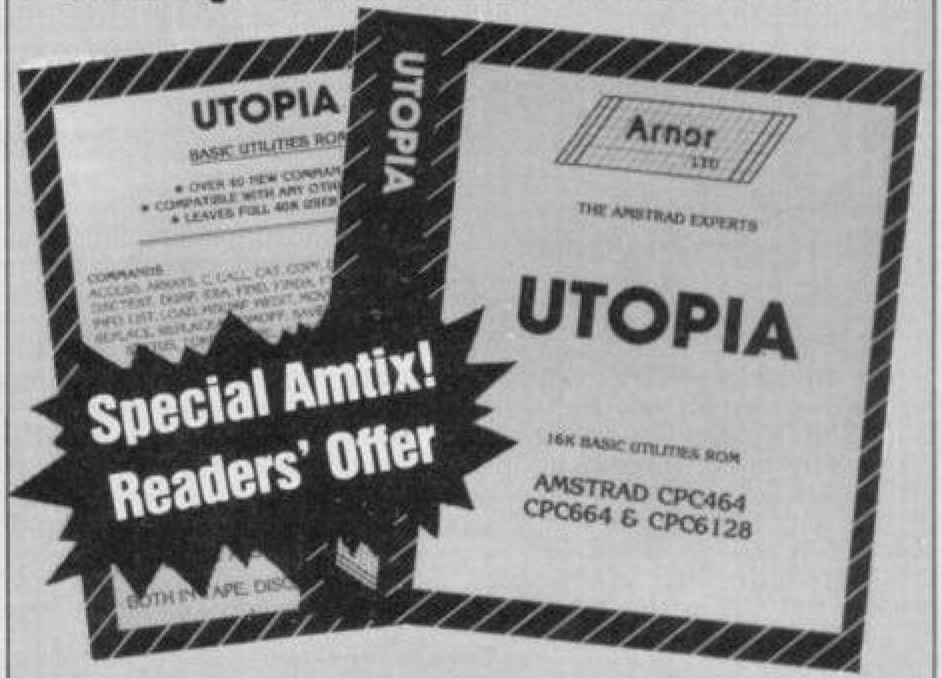
For the more advanced user who maybe starting to dabble in machine code, a memory editor is supplied. Though not quite a full monitor, the editor provides many handy functions that should be of use to even the most trivial of code programmers.

Utopia seems to be in a of a class of its own among the three ROMs and it seems to be aimed mainly at the experienced Amstrad owner who perhaps dabbles in machine code. The extensions provided are extremely handy indeed, the most welcome being the tidying up of Amstrad's disks commands.

Next month, we'll take a look at *Toolkit* **by Beebugsoft, and** *Programmer's Toolbox* **by Super Power.**



Beef up Straddles with UTOPIA



Those nice men who brought us **PROTEXT** have made their latest product available exclusively to the readers of AMTIX!

What is **UTOPIA**? Well it's a state with perfect political and social conditions and — a basic toolkit ROM. The ROM contains a library of useful sub-routines which can be invoked directly with a single external command. Most of the routines are designed to be used from BASIC and make a programmer's life a lot easier. Imagine the convenience of getting a graphics or text screen dump without having to load a program in, just a simple bar command. Besides the commands to help you write your own programs the ROM also has a large number of file commands so you don't have to keep loading in your system disk to perform such mundane operations as FORMAT. Powerful commands enable the user to juggle around bits of memory with ease.

Apart from having your own **UTOPIA** the only other thing you need is a way of plugging it into your Amstrad. No problem. The price includes the Arnor single ROM board which can be located discreetly inside your computer without you even having to take a screwdriver to the thing. Although the ROM is compatible with the 464, 664 and 6128 the board is not, so please let Auntie Aggie in mail order know what type of Straddles you live with. Apart from that the only other requirement is that you should part with a bit of cash (well a cheque or postal order would be better). All we ask is a mere £42.50 and that includes the normal nasties such as VAT, postage and packing.

I enclose a Cheque/Postal order for £42.50 made payable to 'Newsfield Ltd'.

Please send my UTOPIA and ROM board to;

Name ....
Address ....
....
....
.... **Postcode** ....

Auntie Aggie can you send me a board to fit a 464 / 664 / 6128
(circle as appropriate)

UTOPIA OFFER, AMTIX! MAIL ORDER, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

DRAUGHTSMAN

Computer Graphics, £19.95 cass, £24.95 disk

With most software houses following the current trend of **MACPAINT** lookalikes, it is nice to see Computer Graphics adopt a different approach to the problem of creating a user friendly graphics package. **DRAUGHTSMAN** is a drawing utility that makes full use of the function key system, which may require a longer introduction period, but once mastered, provides a very fast and efficient way of accessing a multitude of functions and drawing routines without the physical effort of chasing icons and roll-down menu options.

The function keys are normally annotated in the lower screen area and can thus be allocated differently in the various program sequences. Computer Graphics have opted for a keyboard overlay, which saves screen space — their overlay is placed over the narrow metal strip bearing the Amstrad logo.

The program can be loaded from side A of the tape at speed write 1 (2000 baud) or, if problems are encountered, from side B at speed write 0 (1000 baud). Once running, one of three graphics modes must be selected, whereupon the program displays the default colours. At this point these may be rejected and a new set chosen from the displayed list of available colour options. This leads on to the main program menu with four possible choices, 1) Designing a symbol, 2) Loading symbols, 3) Load a drawing program and 4) Cataloguing (for disk use only).

Option 1 allows multi-character symbols to be created. The width and height may be entered, upon which the program displays the drawing grid of selected height and width of 8 x 8 pixel characters. The cursor keys or joystick control the flashing cursor, with the COPY key or joystick FIRE 1 acting as pixel set or reset switch. Once completed, pressing TAB scans the symbol grid character by character and the symbol is displayed in normal size (mode 1) in the bottom right corner. The symbol may be modified, or if satisfactory, stored in memory. The symbol will be assigned to a key and further symbols may be designed and allocated. The program displays the amount of characters left and also how many more symbols can still be assigned. The symbols can then be saved to tape or disk.

Option 2 reloads previously saved symbols, while selecting the third option initiates the loading of the drawing program. The drawing screen consists of a frame and an information readout box at the top of the screen. This displays a constant update of the x-y coordinates, the current linear distance from the last fix position, a status report indicating the current drawing colour and the function selected, the coordinates of the last fix position and the speed of the cursor (1 slow, 2 medium and 3 fast). In the centre of the screen is a flashing crosswire cursor, which can be moved using the cursor keys or the joystick. The COPY key sets the cursor speed consecutively. The screen can be cleared by pressing CTRL TAB. Similarly, by the repeated use of the ↑ key, the drawing colour may be changed sequentially, thus providing access to all the available colours of the selected drawing mode.

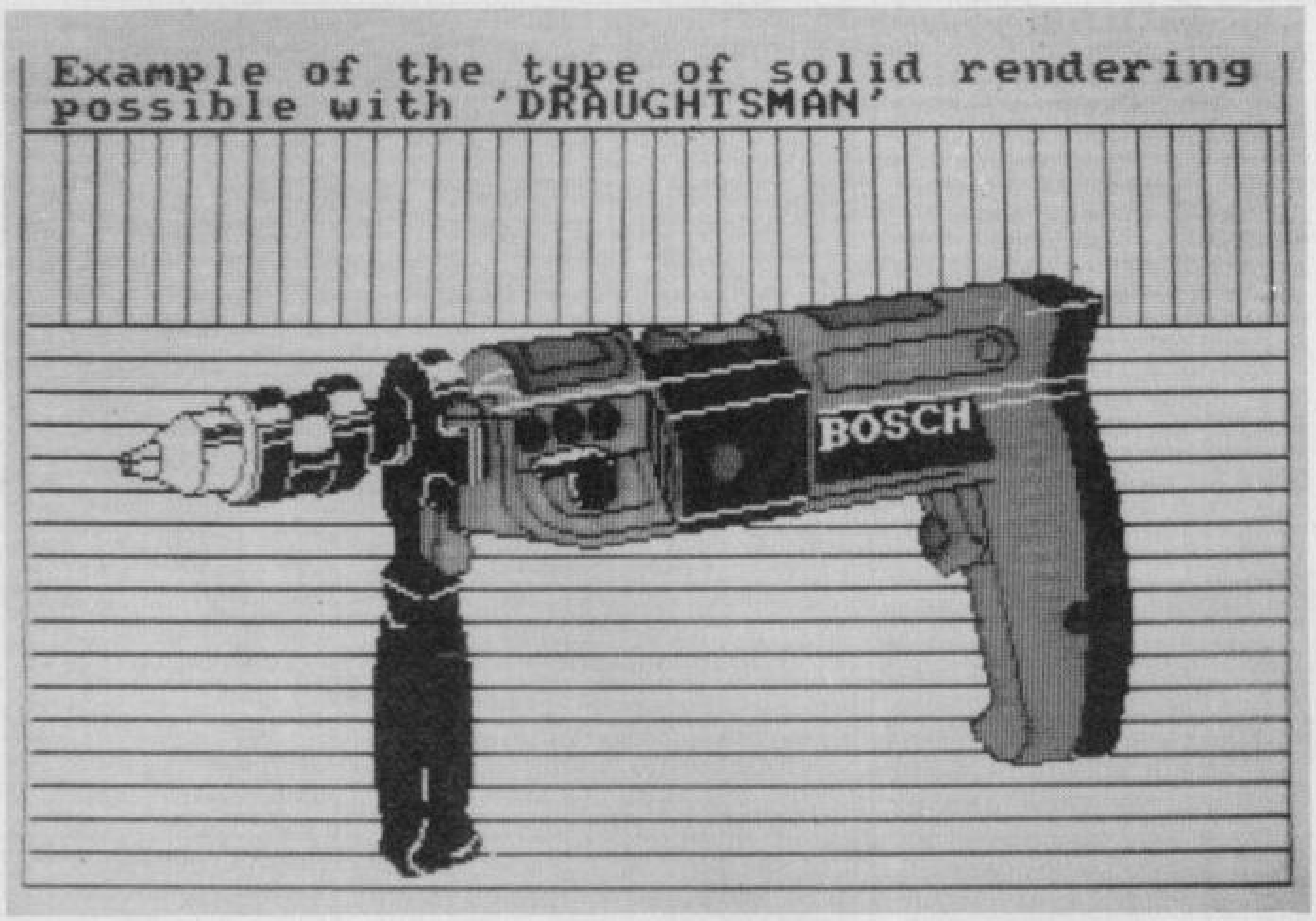
Key 1 or **FIRE 1** sets the fix position to the current cursor position and is indicated with the new x-y readout and zero distance indication. Moving the cursor changes the distance readout.

Key 2 or **FIRE 2** draws a line from the current cursor to the fix point.

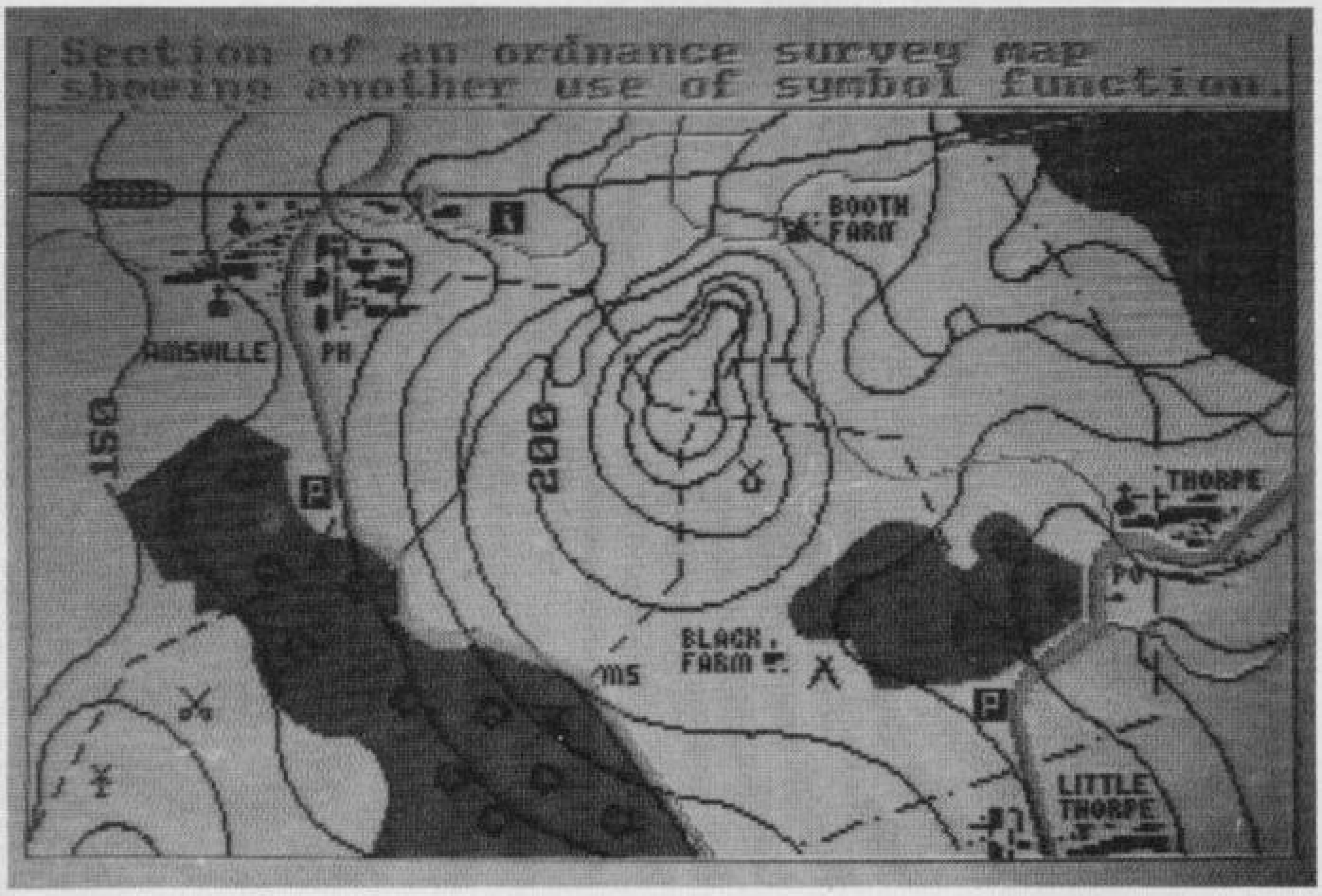
Key 3 provides the circle function with the cursor as centre. The program prompts for the radius, then for DASH or LINE before drawing the appropriate circle. Pressing SHIFT 3 without having moved the cursor erases the circle, but retains the radius and line information, so that if no new value is entered, the original circle will be redrawn.

Key 4 hides the elipse function. Prompts are required for x and y axis, the rotational start and end position (0 and 360 for a full elipse) and DASH or LINE. Again, SHIFT 4 erases the drawn elipse and prompts for new entries.

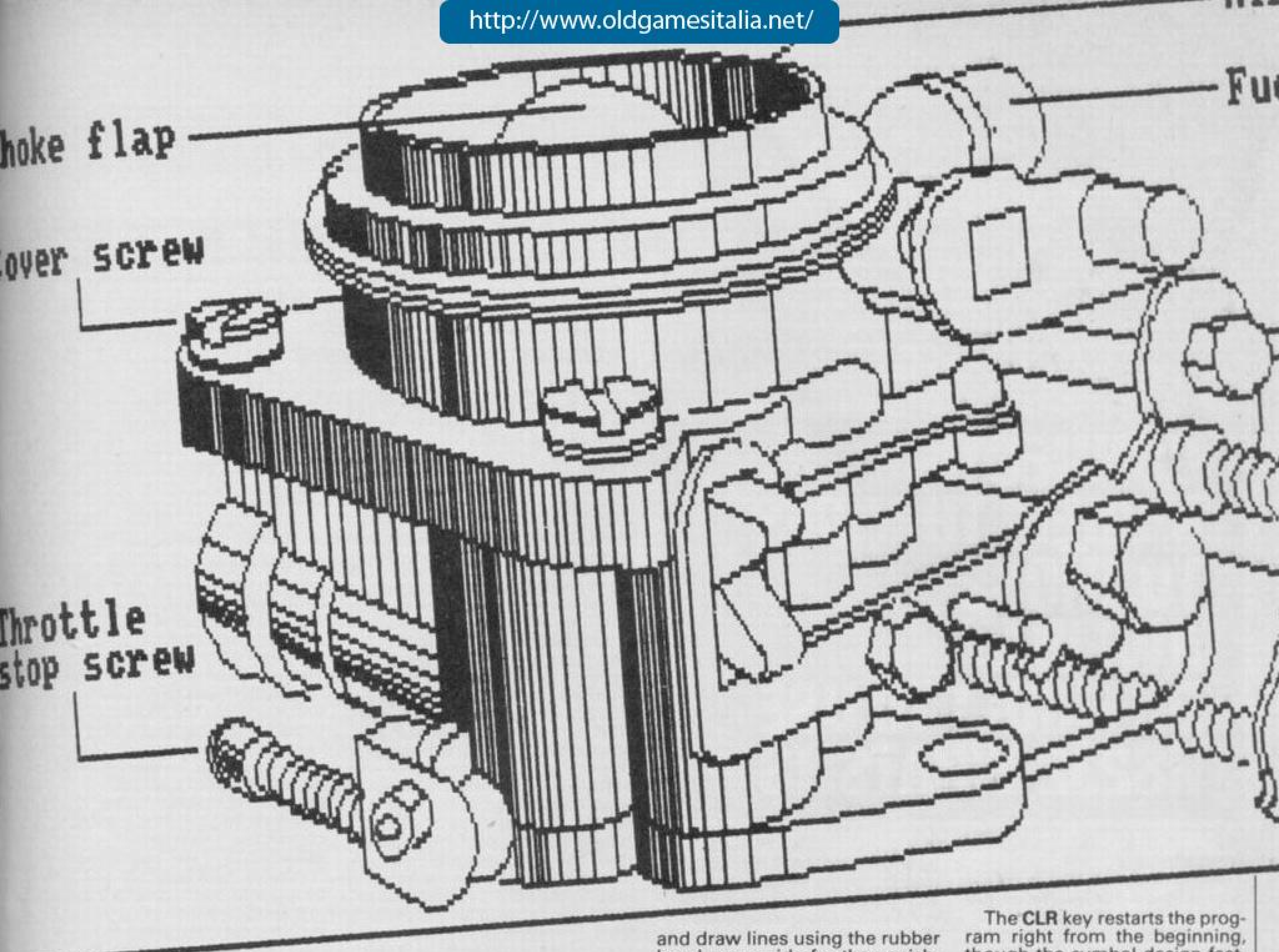
Key 5 is the key to the polygon function. Prompts for radius,



Example of the type of solid rendering possible with 'DRAUGHTSMAN'



Section of an ordnance survey map showing another use of symbol function.



number of sides, rotational start position and line type (DASH or LINE) are given.

Key 6 calls the arc function. Key 1 fixes the start and end position and the third point dictating the curvature of the arc. Again there is the choice of DASH or LINE.

SHIFT 1 provides dot-dash lines and works in exactly the same way as the Key 2 line function.

SHIFT 7 contains a rubber. A flashing X appears and rubs out a pixel at a time. By pressing SPACE BAR the X can be turned into a square of four character spaces, which is useful for erasing larger screen areas. Pressing SPACE BAR again returns the X and pressing SHIFT 7 terminates the rubber function.

SHIFT 9 is the hatching function. Choices are provided for slope angles of 45 or 60 degrees, up or down or horizontal and vertical. All hatching moves from left to right except vertical which moves from the bottom upwards. After selecting the option, pressing the SPACE BAR causes the first hatch line to be drawn. Further hatch lines appear by moving the cursor while holding the **SPACE BAR**. The spacing can be altered by changing the cursor speed. Pressing SHIFT 9 terminates the hatch function.

SHIFT 0 triggers the fill function. On the 464 version the filling process can be abandoned by pressing the ESCAPE key twice.

SHIFT HYPHEN provides the text entry mode. Normal text editing is allowed and entry is terminated with the ENTER key, which prints the text at the current cursor position. Using the cursor keys or joystick the text may be moved around on the screen until it is fixed by pressing SHIFT HYPHEN again.

HYPHEN calls the symbol function. Pressing the key to which a particular symbol is assigned causes the symbol to be printed at the cursor position. Again, similar to normal text, this may be positioned and fixed by pressing HYPHEN again.

DRAUGHTSMAN provides two perspective drawing techniques, with one or two vanishing points.

Key 8 provides the two point perspective and pressing this key displays the horizon which can be moved up or down and fixed with COPY. Next follows the prompt for the X-coordinate of the lefthand vanishing point. If no value is entered, it is set to 0, which is the left edge of the screen. Then follows the prompt for the right-hand vanishing point. Default is 640 (right edge of the screen). The horizon disappears and by pressing Key 7 a rubber band will be drawn from the lefthand vanishing point to a new 'template' cursor and to the right-hand vanishing point. This new cursor can be moved around using SHIFT cursor keys. The normal cursor is still operational and can now be used to fix and draw lines using the rubber band as a guide for the vanishing lines.

Key 9 accesses single point perspective, which operates in a similar manner. The vanishing point is positioned with the cursor keys and fixed by pressing 0. A line will be drawn from the edge of the screen to the vanishing point. This line can be rotated clockwise and anti-clockwise using SHIFT right and SHIFT left cursor keys. Normal drawing mode is reached again by pressing Key 0.

Further assistance in perspective drawing is provided with the DEPTH function. Pressing **SHIFT 8** causes a set of lines indicating equal distances to be drawn, receding towards the horizon. These can be used for judging the amount of fore-shortening that occurs as objects become more distant. Pressing **SHIFT 8** again removes them.

CTRL 0 initiates screen saves. The readout box clears and a filename is requested. The CAT function catalogues a disk in the usual manner, but will obviously destroy the current screen as soon as it is accessed with a **SHIFT D**. Pressing the ESCAPE key twice recalls the drawing mode. **CTRL D** initiates the load function. Once completely loaded, the program 'freezes' to display the entire screen until the SPACE BAR recalls the information readout.

The **DELETE** key can turn the readout display on or off. In fact doing so speeds up the cursor movement, since there is no delay in updating the information display.

The **CLR** key restarts the program right from the beginning, though the symbol design feature will not be accessible any more. Any stored symbols will be lost. **DRAUGHTSMAN** works in conjunction with **TASCOPY**, so that whenever **CTRL 2** is pressed in the main program, the current screen will be dumped to the printer.

DRAUGHTSMAN is a curious graphics utility. Designed primarily for technical drawings, it still proves to be a good all-rounder despite a certain lack of elegance in presentation. The function key system is still a strong favourite when compared to the fashionable icon system — anyone having worked with icons and roll-down menus for a couple of hours will agree that nothing could be more laborious to operate. 3D drawings are greatly helped with the use of vanishing point line guides.

On the more negative side, criticism could be made about the sluggish response, which is largely due to the strong BASIC content of the program. Also it would have been neat to have had the function keys displayed on the screen rather than with a cardboard mask, although this would have cut into the drawing area. Getting used to the controls is no problem thanks to a good introductory manual. What the program definitely lacks is up to date facilities such as a spray-gun, texture filling and variable pen thicknesses — but then this isn't necessarily required for the more technical drawings.

Franco Frey

The new revolution in communications is now beginning to tax the lead laying power of the Straddles owner. If you want to get out and about but keep getting your wires crossed — you're in luck. This month AMTIX! takes the guess work out of connecting modems by outlining how three popular models can be used with Amstrad RS232 interfaces in . . .

CONNECTING MODEM THINGIES TO THOSE AWFULLY DIFFICULT TO USE RS232 WHATSITS

Serial Interfaces

There are two fully Amstrad compatible serial interfaces, the **Amstrad RS232C** and the **HoneySoft HS-S1/2**, both of these have similar connections as shown in table 1. For both interfaces, the flow control signals are equivalent, and the connections to the modems detailed below assumes one of these interfaces is being used.

Table 1 - RS232 Signals

	Pin	Function
1	ground	
2	Transmit data	output
3	Receive data	input
4	RTS Request to send	output
5	CTS Clear to send	input
7	Ground	
8	DCD Data carrier detect	input
20	DTR Data terminal ready	output

The WS2000

The **WS2000** from **Miracle Technology** is the only modem to come complete with a standard 25-pin RS232 connector. Although there are several handshake lines available, not all need to be connected for the modem to operate correctly.

For both the Amstrad and HoneySoft interfaces, transmit data on the modem should be connected to receive data on the interface; likewise with receive data and ground.

The WS2000 uses the RTS line to control the direction of transmission, it should be 'true' for the modem to transmit but may be at any level to receive. As the levels are at RS232 levels, 'true' corresponds to a positive voltage level. The default level for this pin is 'true' and so if the modem is to be used merely for reception (as in most cases) then this need not be connected at all.

If, however, the software being used supports line switching between transmit and receive mode, then this should be connected to the RTS line on the serial interface. This is the case when using the HoneySoft ARQ file transfer technique. The DTR is used as a RESET line for controling hardware within the interface. This should be taken 'false' (low) whenever the operating mode is changed. ie whenever the mode switch is used to select a different baud rate. Neither the Amstrad software nor the HoneySoft supports this feature, and so the modem must be powered down at the mains and then switched on again whenever the mode is changed, or the RS232 channel is closed, and then re-opened using the RSX commands. The DTR line should be held 'true' for normal operation otherwise the modem will be permanently in a re-set state. Since the default condition for this pin is 'true' there is no need to connect this to the interfaces.

The remaining connections are not required for the WS2000 to operate correctly, however the interface must be configured to ensure that all hardware handshaking is effectively disabled. The HoneySoft interface assumes this automatically, and so it does not require any further connections. In order for the Amstrad interface to function correctly, it must have CTS and DCD set true. This can be achieved by connecting pins 4, 5 and 8 together.

WS2000	RS232 interface
Transmit data (pin 2)	Transmit data (pin 2)
Receive data (pin 3)	Receive data (pin 3)
Ground (pin 7)	Ground (pin 7)
RTS (pin 4)	RTS (pin 4), if HoneySoft ARQfile transfer used.
	RTS and DCD (pin 4, 8) together if Amstrad RS232 used with flow control.

Flow Control

Flow control is primarily used to tell one end of a data link to stop sending, in order to prevent characters from being lost. There are two types of flow control; namely hard or soft. Hardware flow control uses RS232 signals such as CTS and DTR to manage data flow, but since RS232 signals cannot be used over telephone lines software flow control is often used instead. Software flow control uses characters which have a special meaning to each end. The character XOFF is normally sent by the receiving end, to stop the transmitter temporarily, until an XON is sent. This type of software flow control is known as XON/XOFF.

In order to use software flow control the hardware signals need to be disabled, this is done by making the output signals (RTS, DTR) assume a true state, and by ignoring the input signals (DCD, CTS) completely. There are commands with the serial interfaces to do this, but unfortunately the modems still expect some hardware signals to control their functions. For instance, modems have a carrier detect output to prevent spurious characters being received into the modem until a connection has been established. If hardware flow control is disabled, then this will be ignored, so there is little point in providing it in the first place! It is recommended that hardware flow control is used, with the connections detailed below.

The PACE Nightingale

This modem was originally aimed at the BBC market, so naturally it has a BBC compatible 5 pin domino socket for connections to the outside world.

There are two BBC compatible flow control signals, CTS and RTS, as well as the data and ground signals to connect. These should be connected directly to their RS232 counterparts, as below.

If the request to send signal to the Nightingale is made 'false', it will release the line, if held, even if the Nightingale's online switch is on.

NIGHTINGALE RS232

Data into modem	(pin 2)	Transmit data	(pin 2)
Data out of modem	(pin 3)	Receive data	(pin 3)
RTS, Request to Send	(pin 4)	RTS	(pin 4)
CTS, Clear to send	(pin 5)	CTS	(pin 5)
Ground	(pin 1)	Ground	(pin 7)
		Connect DCD to RTS (pin 4).	(pin 8)

GEC Datachat 1223

This modem uses a 5 pin DIN connector, with yet another pin out. Two flow control signals, RTS and DCD, have been provided. The DCD output line is true when the modem is online and a carrier has been detected, as shown by the red and yellow indicators on the front panel.

The RTS input line is used for selecting between transmit and receive mode, using line turnround techniques. Normally this should be connected to RTS at the RS232 interface, but if the software in use does not support half duplex operation this should be connected to ground. This will usually be the case.

Datachat 1223	RS232 Interface
Transmitted data (pin 1)	Transmit data (pin 2)
Received data (pin 5)	Receive data (pin 3)
DCD,Carrier Detect (pin 4)	DCD(pin 8)
Ground (pin 3)	Ground (pin 7)
RTS, Request to Send (pin 2)	Ground (pin 7) or RTS (pin 4), if HoneySoft ARQfile Transfer software used. Connect CTS (pin 5) to DCD(pin 8).

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PROTEXT

FOR AMSTRAD 464/664, 6128

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BENCHTESTS

A standard file of 775 words (4,785 characters) was used to carry out the following benchtests (all timings are in seconds):

	PROTEXT	TASWORD/AMSWORD
1 LOAD text file	4.7	10.2
2 SAVE text file	4.9	18.9
3 Re-FORMAT paragraph (85 words)	0.4	15.3
4 Re-FORMAT entire text	2.5	Not Possible
5 Move directly to start of text	under 0.1	2.2
6 Move directly to end of text	0.2	2.2
7 REPLACE 'the' with 'THE' (45 occurances)	1.7	34.1
8 SCAN entire text	2.2	7.2
9 MERGE file to centre of text	4.0	Not Possible
10 MERGE file to end of text	3.8	12.4
11 MOVE 85-word paragraph	under 0.1	6.8
12 PROGRAM LOAD TIME DISC ROM	 12.9 Instant	 14.6 Not Available

PROTEXT FEATURE SUMMARY

File commands – Super fast Load, Merge and Save, Cat, Print (to printer/screen/file).
Cursor Movement – By character/word/line/paragraph/screen, to start or end of line, to start or end of text, to line number, to place marker, to margin.
Inserting and deleting – Insert/overwrite mode, insert character or line, delete character forwards or backwards, delete word.
FIND and REPLACE – Wildcards, all or part of text, case specific, whole word or part of word, find control codes.
Block commands – Move/copy/delete/save/print/format.
Markers – 2 block markers and 10 place markers may be set anywhere.
Formatting – Word wrap, right justify, variable left and right margins.
Ruler lines – Unlimited number of ruler lines to define margins and tabs.
Print options – Headers/footers, page numbers, variable line spacing, variable page length and margin sizes, conditional page throws, odd and even page features, continuous or single sheets, multiple copies.
Printer features – Including emphasised, condensed, double-strike, elite, italics, enlarged, pica, NLQ, subscript, superscript, underline. Built in Epson printer driver. Ability to easily define your own printer driver and save to disc.
Help features – Optional on screen command summaries.
Built in character sets – Danish/French/German/Italian/Spanish/Swedish.
Other features – Non break space, display tabs, returns and hard spaces, soft hyphens, word count, case conversion, copy ruler. 40 page easy to read manual with full index and glossary of terms.

"I AM STUNNED AT PROTEXT . . . KNOCKS POCKET WORDSTAR INTO A COCKED HAT" – AMTIX ISSUE 1

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COMMS ON THE CHEAP

Accoustic Modem from Circuit Holdings

The ever growing number of bulletin boards and the continued expansion of services such as Micronet is a direct result of the expanding interest being shown in computer communications. This is not surprising when one considers the huge range of interesting material being held on other people's computers just waiting to be pumped down the phone lines and pop up on your screen. However, many people people resist the temptation to join the hordes because of the expected cost. The hardware costs can be pretty daunting, after all you need not only a modem but an interface and software to boot, that could set you back nearly £150. **Circuit Holdings** may have come up with an answer. Their modem/interface/software package costs a mere £30

Some of you may remember a company called Protek. Until early this year Protek marketed a cheap acoustic modem for the Spectrum, Commodore and — oddly enough — Amstrad. Sadly Protek went out of business leaving Circuit, the manufacturers of the hardware, with a cupboard full of the things. Being pretty sharp chaps Circuit commissioned Honeysoft to write the software and they set out into the market place once again.

Acoustic modems have no physical connection into the phone system, instead the phone's handset is stuffed into a pair of rubber sockets and communication effected by sound alone. The bonus, from the supplier's point of view is that such a modem easily qualifies for the green blob, the Telecom mark of approval. From the users' point of view they are not as tidy as a direct wired modem, upset by 'outside' noise and they do rely on your phone fitting into the receptacles. If you have a very flash phone with triangular ear and mouth pieces then what you have got is a Problem.

FITTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The first trick is to make sure that the two sets of required batteries are installed and sufficient. Pushing the phone into place is easy enough, except that I put it in upside down. Fitting the interface to the back of Straddles is a sinch. I was surprised to see that not only did the interface bear the words, 'This way up' but it also had a location key. The next stage is to load the software.

The opening menu offers five options; **Prestel link**, **terminal**, **receive file**, **send file** and **exit**. Selecting 'Prestel' takes you into another menu which offers Prestel in mode 0 or 1. Two other options facilitate page saving or loading. The final option simply returns you to the front menu. Prestel mode 0 permits the display of eight colours together with double height and flashing characters. Mode one is the four colour mode but a further four colours are made available by a process called 'stippling' which simply means that two colours are blended together in dot form to produce another. Mode 1 does not allow flashing characters. Some Prestel pages have hidden characters for your added fun and delight. Pressing the COPY key toggles between 'reveal' and 'hide'. For convenience the much used Prestel instructions, 'star' and 'hash', have been assigned to the Decimal Point and Enter keys. As each page is received from Prestel it's loaded into a buffer so you can flick between screen modes without losing the current page. The current page can be saved onto disk under a selected file name and later loaded back for viewing or printing.

The Terminal Menu (second main option) offers some predefined configurations for Telecom Gold, Easylink and Bulletin boards running at 1200/75 baud; and user-defined parameters are also allowed. A full range of parameters are provided but not all of them can be used with the acoustic modem. For example, the baud rate 300/300 is offered but only 1200/75 and 1200/1200 baud can be handled by the modem.

The software makes provision for the transfer of files, including ASCII formatted programs, over the phone line. The data is transfered using automatic repeat request. If any data is found to be corrupted then the receiving terminal asks for it to be sent again, and again. After five attempts it gives up. This is a reliable system and users should have few problems except when in a noisy environment or using a very poor phone line. Of course it's always a good idea to keep an eye on the batteries. The software supplied uses a series of RSX's which can be loaded and used in users' own programs. You could write a personalised file transfer program without any undue hardship and only a little imagination.

In a similar way, the interface unit can be used to drive other RS232 devices, such as printers, plotters or even directly connected to another computer. The software and hardware are exhaustively documented. The documentation supplied is on tape and must be read on screen or printed out.

UNCOMPROMISING VALUE

As a package the Circuit Prestel Link is very good value for money. Not only do you get a modem which lets you talk to everything bar the 300/300 clan, but you also get an interface that can be used for a variety of applications. Using the interface to drive a printer or simply transfer files from one computer to another is made easy because you can use the software direct or 'pull' out the RSX's and use those on their own. The technical documentation deals with every aspect of the hardware and software, but it is, however, a little difficult to follow. The general instructions, running to two A4 sheets, are clear and understandable. With regard to the performance of the modem itself I can find few faults. I do not like the display in mode 1 but mode 0 is fine, excepting that some of the characters are a little difficult to distinguish — 8 and 0 for example. It would have been useful to have had a print function on the menu. The only way to obtain hard copy is to save the screen and afterwards load it back and dump it with a screen dump routine. However users will be able to upgrade the software supplied by adding a text dump function as well as the capacity to download tele-software. The interface is not compatible with CP/M but that is unlikely to cause any great concern.

Generally I dislike acoustic modems but not for any valid reason. They are functional and, so long as they are used in a quiet environment, reliable. If you fancy a dabble into the world of communication you should think long and hard before paying out more than the asking price for this package.

Jeremy Spencer

Cirkit
PRESTEL LINK
AMSTRAD INTERFACE
Cirkit Distribution Ltd.

You, The Law and Straddles

There you are, snuggled up for the night in front of your beloved computer, confident that, for the moment at least, you and Straddles are safe from the ravages of the EEC.

Donning his curly wig and pince nez, JEREMY SPENCER peeks into the fun and games devised by Eurocrats to protect us from none other than ourselves and our secret databases . . .

Wrong! You see sitting in some dark vault in Brussels is a document known as the *Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals*. The UK placed its paw print on this document some time ago, but if it is to abide by some of its rules then legislation will be necessary. On the 12th of July 1984 the *Data Protection Act* (hereinafter referred to as the Act) shuffled its way onto the statute books.

The Act was designed to set up the necessary machinery to afford individuals some legal rights with respect to automatically processed information. In the belief that many Amstrad users may keep some sort of electronic database, either for private or professional use, it seems like a good idea to give some pointers as to how the Act may affect you.

Act I Scene I

It would be as well to define what the Act has in mind when it refers to *Personal Data*. It defines such information as that *Relating to living individuals, including expressions of opinion but excluding any indication of the intention of the Data User*. It does not apply to information kept on companies or associations. The Act lovingly refers to individuals as *Data Subjects*.

The general attitude of the Act is that everybody who uses a computer, or some electronic means, to manipulate *Personal Data* should register. Panic. Well the idea is that it is better to register even if there's no need rather than risk having your Amstrad sent to jail. However there are a number of exceptions the most important one being: Personal data held by an individual *'concerned only with the management of his personal, family or household affairs or held by him for recreational purposes'*. That provision excludes the few occasions where a private individual might maintain a database. An example would be using a computer to keep an address book. However, it does **not** exclude the likes of a teacher who might keep pupils' records on his home computer.

Another common home computer application is the keeping of records for clubs or societies. That use is not exempt from registration under the above provision either. Instead that sort of application is *Conditionally Exempt*, this area of the Act is a real bundle of laughs.

There are four areas of Conditional Exemption:

1. Where data used relates to the calculation of payment or pensions in respect of employment.
2. Keeping accounts of financial dealings for the purpose of ensuring that payments and receipts are recorded. That information can also be used for producing management forecasts for use in the business or activity.
3. Data held by unincorporated members' clubs and relating **only** to club members.
4. Data held for the distribution of articles or information to the Data Subjects but consisting only of their names and addresses and other information necessary for the distribution.

Well that would seem to relieve quite a few from the pains of registration but before you breath a sigh of relief there are a few catches. These Conditional Exemptions apply so long as the data is used as described above. In the case of the payroll you must not disclose that information except in limited circumstances, such as for the purpose of an audit or for research into occupational diseases. If the information is to be used for purposes other than those allowed by the act, then registration will be required. Points 3 and 4 are tempered by what seems to be a catch-all requirement. That is that those applications are only exempt if the Data Subjects have been asked if they object to their being on your data base. If any of the Data Subjects do object then you must register. That requirement is going to cause quite a few problems. Take as an example the list of subscribers held on our computer. That data base is exempt under point 4 but only if we inform all of the subscribers and do not receive any objections. A club or society faces a similar restriction. In most cases a simpler course of action would be to register.

What is it all going to do?

To be honest the Act tends to be very vague, which may explain the Registrar's preference for people registering even if there is some reason why they may not have to. What really counts will be the rights that such an act bestows on individuals but even that area is poorly defined. In a nutshell, the Act lays down that an individual has the right to ask for Data Users to confirm that he is a Data Subject on that User's database, and if so then the Data Subject can ask for a copy of the Personal Data. The Act also bestows on an individual the right to seek compensation if a Data Subject suffers as a result the disclosure of the data without his authority or if the data is inaccurate. A court can also order correction or erasure of offending data.

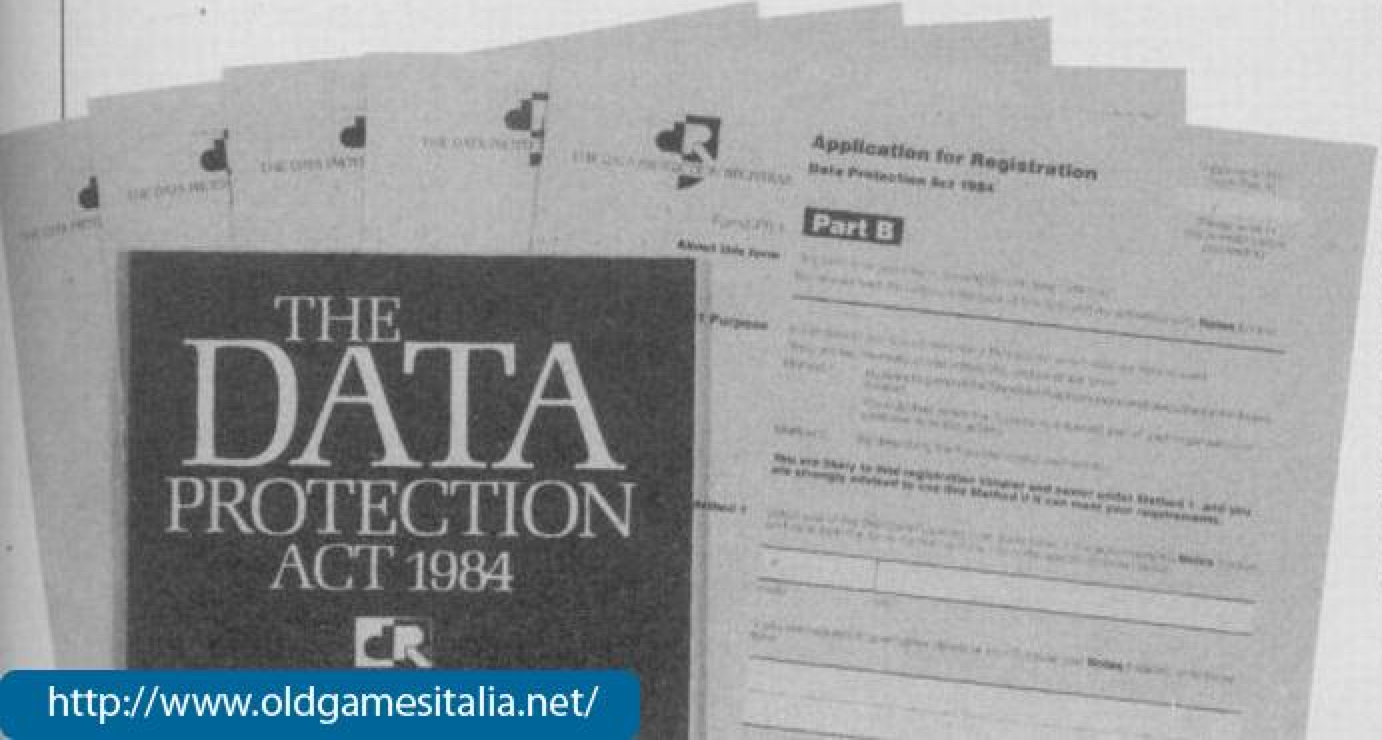
There are a great many restrictions on the range of data that an individual can demand to see. For example data used for the detection of crime is exempt from subject access, but only so long as the disclosure of said data could reasonably be said to hinder the purpose for which it is kept. Another problem area concerns exactly what type of data falls under the scope of the Act. Companies keeping credit references could claim that a reference was an indication of that company's intention, ie to trade with a person or not to, rather than a fact on an individual. Facts or opinions must be disclosed to the Data Subject while the intention of a Data User need not be. So far it seems that the Act will treat such credit information as disclosable, any other course of action would render the act next to useless. Finally, the Act does not award any rights or obligations with respect to data that never gets near a computer. You never know, that may even lead to a reduction in the work done by computers.

The Data Protection Act is going to need a lot of fine tuning from the courts before the rights and obligations imposed by it are fully understood. In two years time I suspect that it will be used a great deal especially when you consider that individuals will, for the first time, have the right to inspect their own medical and educational records — so long as they are kept on a computer.

Footnote

For those who need to register you have until May 11 1986 to do so. If you need further information then ask at your nearest Post Office for the **Data Protection Registration Pack** or consult the **Data Protection Registrar, Springfield House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. Phone 0625 535777**

As yet Data Subjects do not have the right to inspection. This will come into force in two years time. However if you do suffer damage because data concerning you has been misused then you can seek redress in the courts, that right has existed since September 1984.



THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984

Application for Registration
Data Protection Act 1984

Part B

EASY WRITER

Interceptor Micros, £9.99 cass

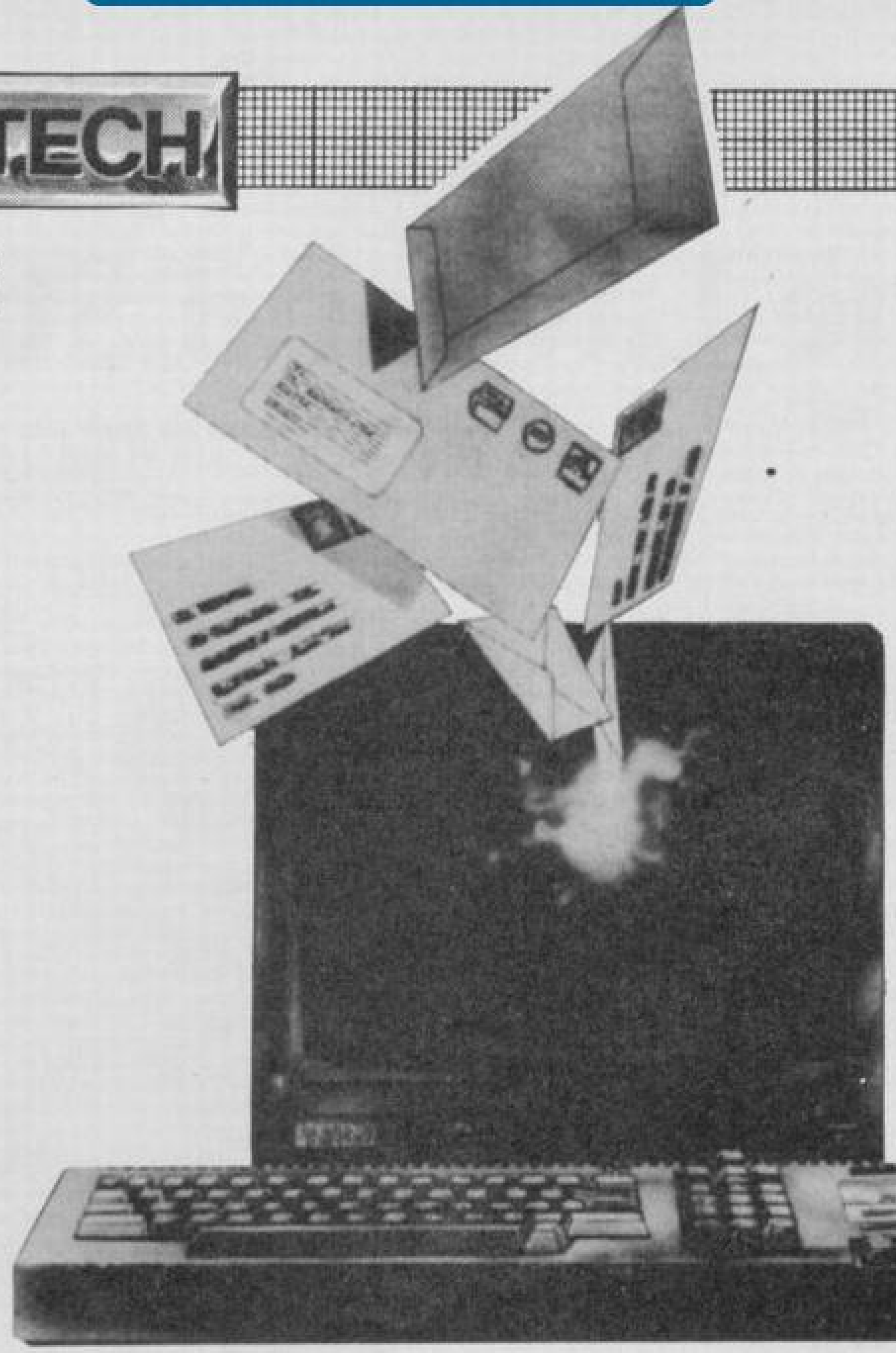
The Amstrad is popularly perceived as a low end of the market business machine so it's only logical that it should occasionally receive low end of the market software. *Easy Writer* is such a product, aimed at home users not requiring an all-encompassing word processor. What *Easy Writer* does provide is a simplistic editor for the creation of short pieces of text.

The editor works in mode 2 with a default white upon black text display. As far as I could tell, there was absolutely no way of changing the screen mode or colour settings. Those of you who own colour monitors may find the headaches start to creep in after a couple of hours use.

After watching the pretty loading screen take five minutes to load in, the main program itself loaded in about half the time. You are then asked to set the left and right margin defaults. For some reason, once the margins are set, they can't be changed unless you are willing to destroy any text in memory. To reset margins you type CTRL and R simultaneously.

No automatic insert mode is provided and you have to manually insert any characters. This can be extremely awkward since you need to know how many letters have to be inserted before touching the insert key. Normally the program works in overwrite mode, so anything typed will write over and destroy any text already there. Once the rest of the text has been inserted, it usually unformats itself, causing words to straddle across the ends of lines. A reformat paragraph function is provided for just such an occurrence, though it's not really an elegant solution. The delete function doesn't really work as expected either. If there is a return on the previous line and you try to delete it you find yourself deleting a line full of spaces, slowly working your way back to the return symbol.

Full tab functions are provided, both setting and resetting to any place within the editing area. Save and load only work with cassette — if you've got a disk drive *Easy Writer* doesn't want to know. Unlike rival product *Tasword*, there is also no facility at all for the user to upgrade the program to disk. Since quite a few users own disk drives, it would have been logical to have included such an option instead of forcing disk users back to slow down to the speed of cassette recorders. On loading, all text previously stored in memory is deleted, so there's no way of merging files from within the program.



When it comes to printing your letter, you have a choice between continuous and single sheet paper. There's no documented way to send control codes to the printer, which is quite an oversight to those wanting different styles of text in one document.

There are one or two competitors to *Easy Writer* at this end of the market and it isn't one of the worst by any means, but get what you pay for, and I think doubling the money to get the excellent *Tasword* is worth it. asy Writer is not excellent. To use it is awkward and its scope is very limited indeed. It's more of a word mincer than processor. On the other hand, it presents quite good value for money if you have few serious demands of it.

Gary Liddon

MUSIC MAESTRO

Kuma, £9.95 cass
Author: S Jones & P Midcalf

Music Maestro is a program which turns your Amstrad into a reasonably respectable music tool. By careful manipulation of the sound chip, the program offers the user the ability to enter a single line tune that can span up to three octaves, define note lengths and accompany the tune with a drum pattern of either your own making or one of the preset patterns. It can provide arpeggio (broken chord) accompaniment and fill out even the simplest tune. In short, it does most of what a small single keyboard instrument does. For the beginner, there is a quick and well worked out example in the instruction booklet, although I would have welcomed a software driven demonstration tune as well as one on paper. The maximum number of notes that can be stored in any one tunes is a generous 2000 and a library of tunes can be stored on tape or disk and brought out to impress friends or relatives.

Most of the commands are input from the keyboard which saves a lot of time and messing about. Notes have to be entered as the note name plus its length. The cursor runs over a list of note names and lengths and you select what you want. Rests and chords are similarly entered. One or two niggles here. You cannot enter notes or rests of over four beats or under half a beat in length. It would have been a simple matter to include this. It also becomes apparent that if you fail to enter a chord at the right place, there is no way of editing it back in.

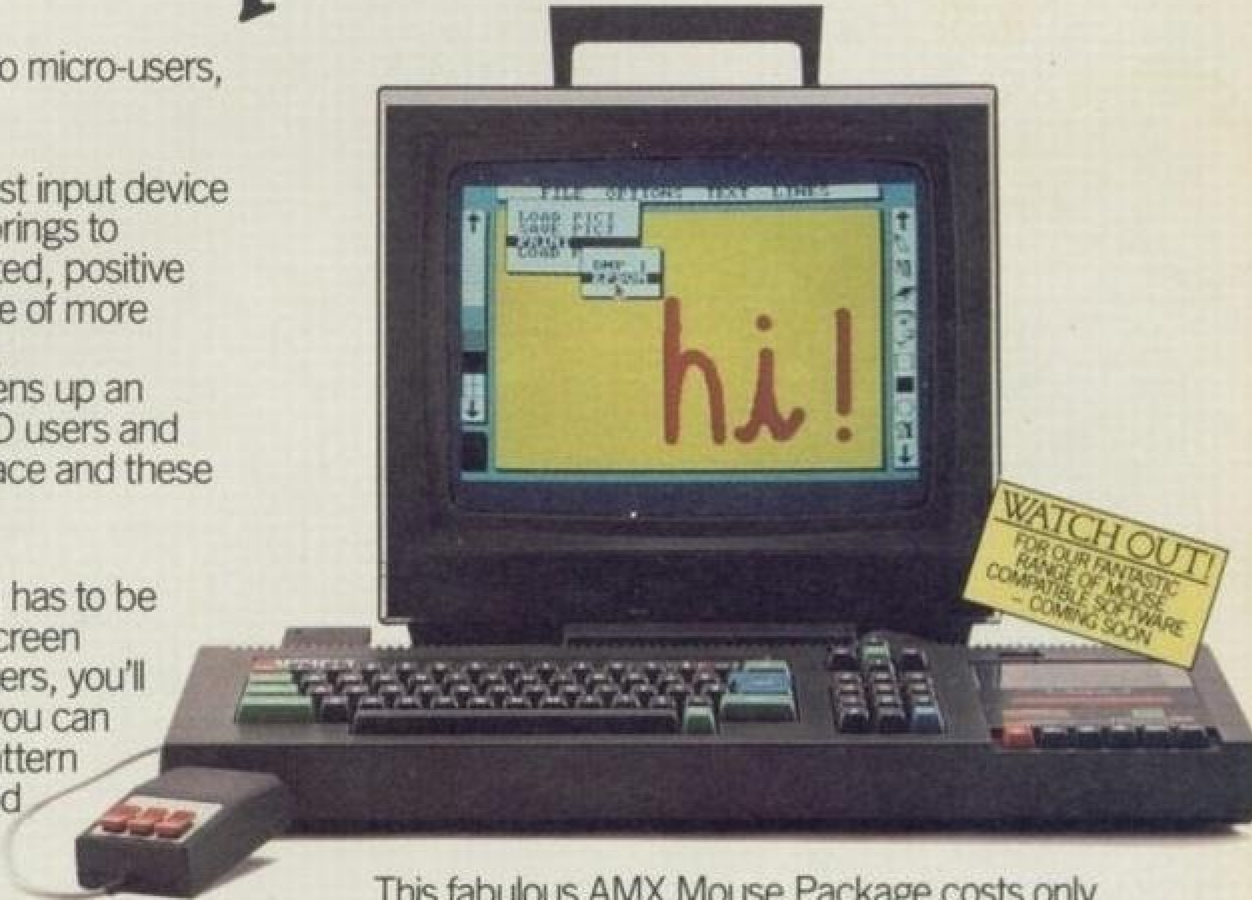
The Edit feature enables you to skip through the notes you have entered and point the cursor at the erring bum note, painlessly remove it and insert the correct one. You can also insert notes with ease. However, the Edit replay mode does not acknowledge note lengths or rests. This could cause problems if your tune contains rests or if you aren't sure about note lengths. I would have liked to have seen a copy function as well, as generating loops of notes is great fun.

The actual sound created can be altered by keying in **6** from the keypad. This changes the tone to your liking. The selection of sounds on offer is a bit limited and a wider option to poke around in the sound chip would have been preferred. The drums that can be added are either high, medium or low in pitch and to be honest, they could have been a bit more compressed in sound. Although the patterns and versatility of the program are good, the net sound is a little wayward. The arpeggio accompaniment is generous in that it gives you eight patterns, each one having four variations, making a total of thirty two possible accompaniments. This is good but the overall effect is marred by the fact that the program has chosen to voice the arpeggios so that they clash with the melody line. Perhaps a volume control for the arpeggios would be the answer here, as whatever pattern or octave I chose, they still swamped the tune. There are many books on the market that consist of simple tunes laid out as single line tune plus chord symbols. These would be a useful addition to the program. Perhaps even a few could have been included in the instructions as well as some alternate drum patterns to try out.

Overall, this is an interesting program, if a little frustratingly executed. Input of notes is a little slow and I suspect the quality of sound could become irritating after a while. Full marks for variety and if you want a programmable, non-performance keyboard, then try it.

Jon Bates

We thought it was about time we put you in the picture.


FILE OPTIONS TEXT LINES
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AMX ART

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2. An Icon designer, an individual program for creating and storing icons for use in your own programs. The number and variety of icons you can create is limited only by your needs and imagination.

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CA

Yie Ar KUNG-FU

Imagine, £8.95 cass

Imagine have come to the rescue for those of us who spend our time waiting for the Kung Fu arcade machine to be vacated. *Yie Ar KUNG-FU* is the Amstrad version of one of the most popular arcade games licensed from the Japanese company, Konami. Similar to Melbourne House's *Way Of The Exploding Fist* this is a martial arts combat game. You will be expected to battle it out against some of the nastiest chaps ever to venture from Japan's shores.

Your baggy trousered chap makes his appearance against the same background that the arcade version boasts, except that the waterfall is motionless. Even before you can catch your breath your first opponent comes flying into view. You don't even have time to enjoy any of the pleasantries found in other combat games — your opponent won't pause for any of that bowing and scraping rubbish, instead he will just set about you, kicking punching and generally being very unfriendly. Since this is combat there are no judges, the winner is the chap who can limp away leaving his victim wriggling on the floor. The top centre of the screen shows the knock out meter: every time you land a blow on your opponent his bar will decrease. The amount it decreases depends on the severity of the blow you land. The blows themselves are registered by a quick flash appearing on the part of the victim's anatomy which will later bear a bruise.

Your man's actions are controlled either via the keyboard or joystick. The Amstrad version offers ten modes of attack and a further six movement options, giving sixteen different moves which must be controlled by using all eight points on a joystick combined with the fire button to obtain a further eight. The keyboard can be defined to taste but otherwise it is set up to use the numeric keypad with zero as fire. The attacking moves include the more recognisable forms of attack plus a few novel ones. Each movement varies in the damage it does to the victim and the number of points it gains for the player. A flying kick scores 2000 points while a roundhouse kick and leg sweep only scores 500. The more unusual forms of attack, like the stride punch or the ground kick will add 1500 points to your score.

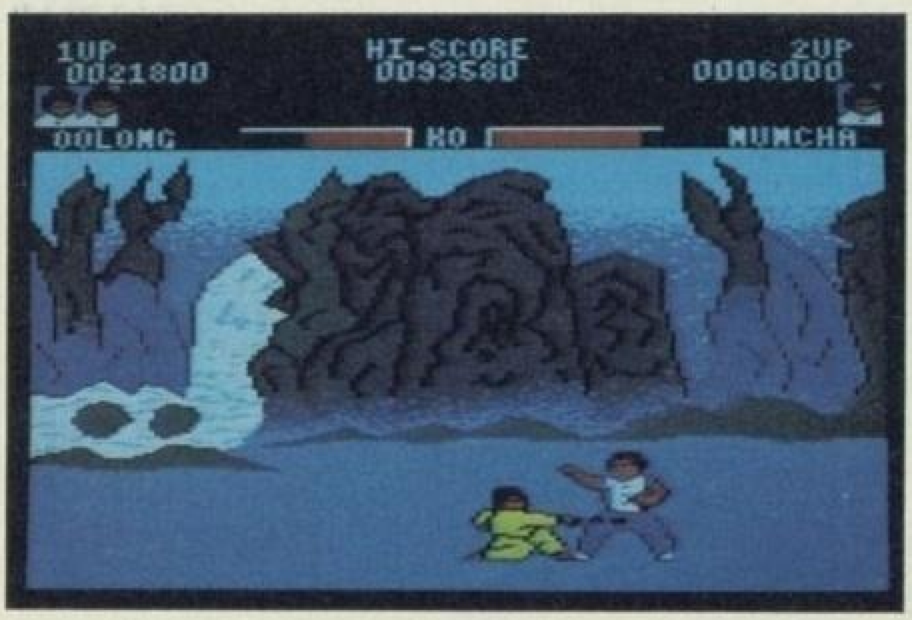
To complete the game, you must defeat all of the opponents. If any one of them defeats you, then you lose one of your four lives and must fight that bout again. In all you must fight your way past eight foes, one less than the arcade version. The first chap, Buchu, is a big beefy bloke who likes flying a lot. The only thing decent about this man is that he confines himself to using his bare hands. The next fighter has a considerable advantage over you since he throws fighting stars when he is out of reach of your flailing limbs. If you fail to avoid them, either by ducking or jumping, they deliver some nasty blows. The third opponent uses those nasty sticks joined by a short chain, nunchkas. If you survive him you will have to face being attacked with a pole, a club and a sword. The final two rounds come under the headings Tonfun and Blues. You can discover those for yourself.

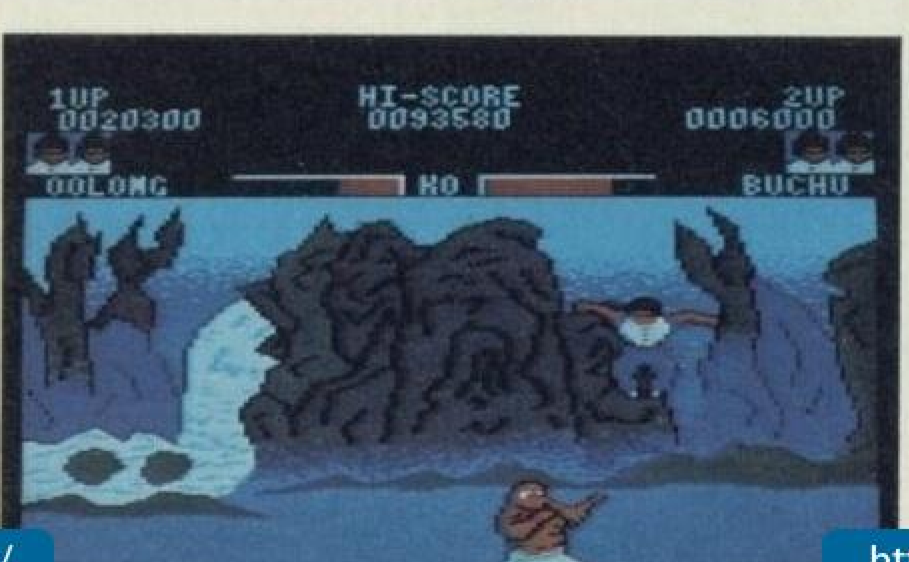
The layout of the screen faithfully follows the style of the arcade game. The top of the screen displays the number of lives that you have remaining and the points you have scored so far. The current high score is also shown. Once a game is over you have to enter your name on the high score table in true arcade style. The two player option does not allow two people to compete but instead offers the same option found on an arcade machine, that is two people taking it in turns to take on the computer.

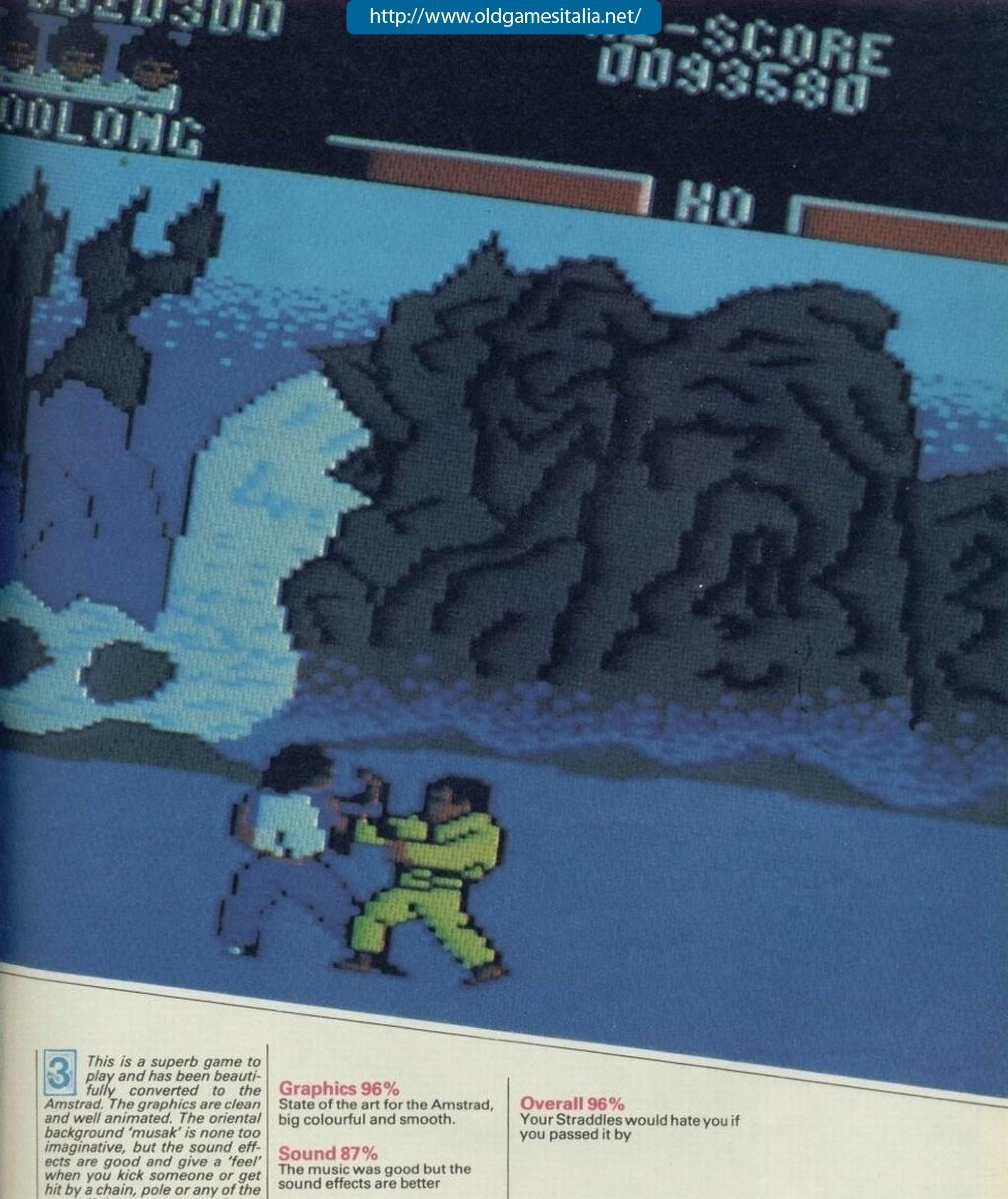
CRITICISM

1 **Imagine don't have many Amstrad games under their belt but nothing they have ever done compares to this. The graphics are superb and the fighting action the best I have seen. The movement of the warriors is great. I love the way the vanquished chap ends up on the floor, legs waving in the air. As far as I am concerned the people who converted this to the Amstrad have done a first class job: they have set a standard by which I will judge other games.**

2 *Yie Ar KUNG-FU* is the game I would have chosen instead of *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*. It is altogether much more challenging and playable. The levels of enemy area lot more difficult to defeat and the different characters and weapons add a lot of depth to the game. I thought the idea of showing the area of impact with a flash worked very well, after all it's possible to damage your opponent by stamping on his hand and it's nice to be able to see that you have stamped on his hand! The music was not remarkable but it complemented the game. The sound effects were very good indeed — the chap swirling the sticks was made all the more frightening by the accompanying sound. My only regret was that Imagine have stuck so closely to the arcade version that the two player option does not allow you to take on another human: instead it only allows two players to take on the computer in turns. This program has been done so well that the rest of the industry will have to look hard and long at the quality of their conversions. We are beginning to see what can be done on a Amstrad.







3 *This is a superb game to play and has been beautifully converted to the Amstrad. The graphics are clean and well animated. The oriental background 'musak' is none too imaginative, but the sound effects are good and give a 'feel' when you kick someone or get hit by a chain, pole or any of the nasty little weapons employed by the Japanese knuckle-draggers. After only a few minutes you will become 'Oolong', totally dedicated to your task, pausing only for the odd bowl of rice to keep your 'Ho' up.*

Presentation 75%
The provision of the key define option was a necessary inclusion, we didn't get to see the inlay but it's bound to be neat

Graphics 96%
State of the art for the Amstrad, big colourful and smooth.

Sound 87%
The music was good but the sound effects are better

Playability 93%
It may take a little while to get the hang of the moves but once mastered they are dynamite

Addictive qualities 95%
No self respecting arcade player could leave it alone

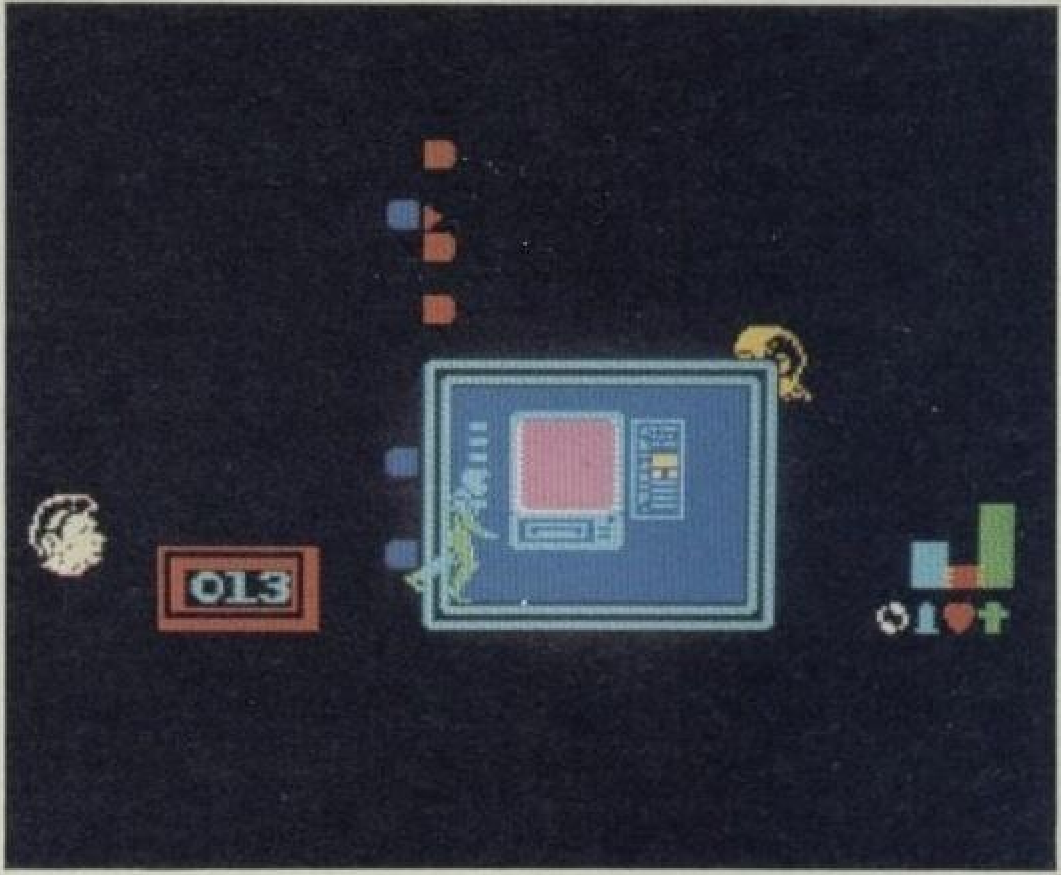
Value For Money 90%
Another game at the artificially high price but at least this is worth it.

Overall 96%
Your Straddles would hate you if you passed it by

AN AMTIX! ACCOLADE

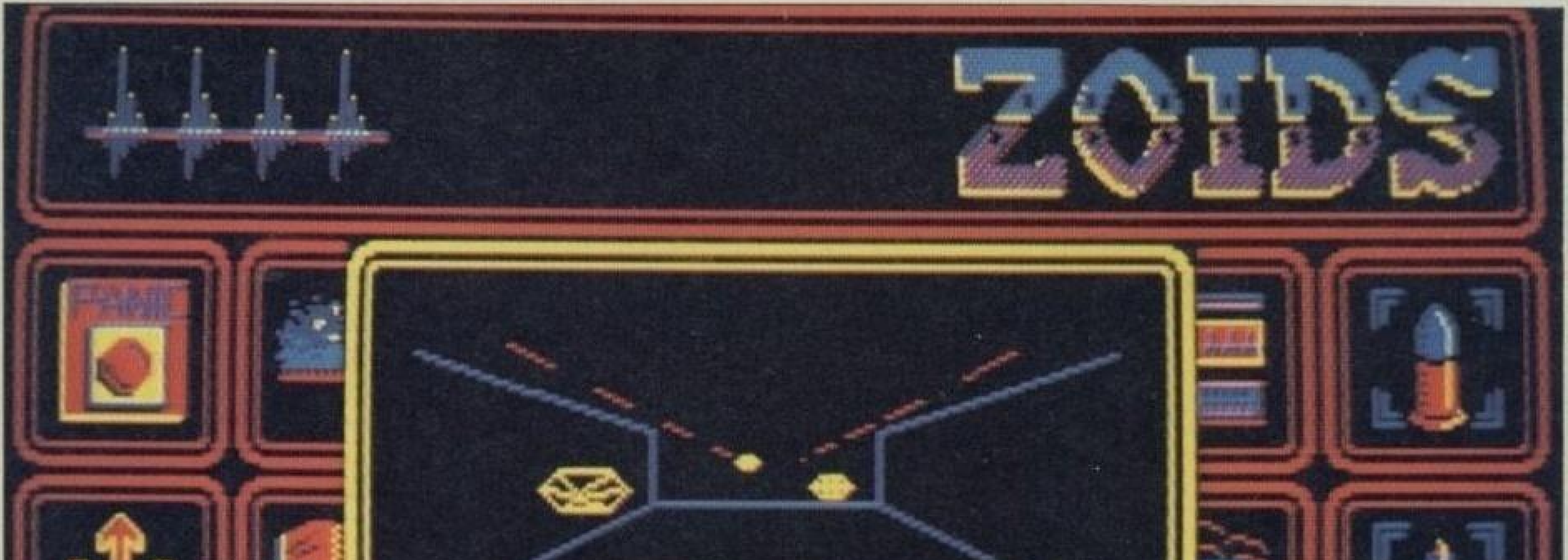
SOMETHING ELSE TO ST

Life here at **AMTIX! Towers** does have its frustrations. Apart from the storage heaters, which defy Franco Frey's technical wizardry and simply refuse to do anything other than act as racks for piles of magazines, we have to cope with the psychological ailment termed as 'excessive protracted stimulation due to belated appearance of exciting games'. It may seem greedy that despite the number of excellent games we have been able to review for this issue, that we should want yet more. Unfortunately our reviewers' games huge appetite is never satisfied so as soon as they hear of an interesting new title they start to go up the wall, rising higher day by day until said title turns up. This causes quite a few problems, not least being muddy footprints all over the wall paper. To give you an opportunity of experiencing this frustration for yourself I thought it might be a good idea to mention four games which seem promising and that should be available in time for the festive bit of the year. Of course it would have been nice to have reviewed the games but due to any number of reasons extracted from 'The Programmers Book of Excuses to Explain Late Software' they simply haven't appeared in a complete enough form to warrant the full treatment.

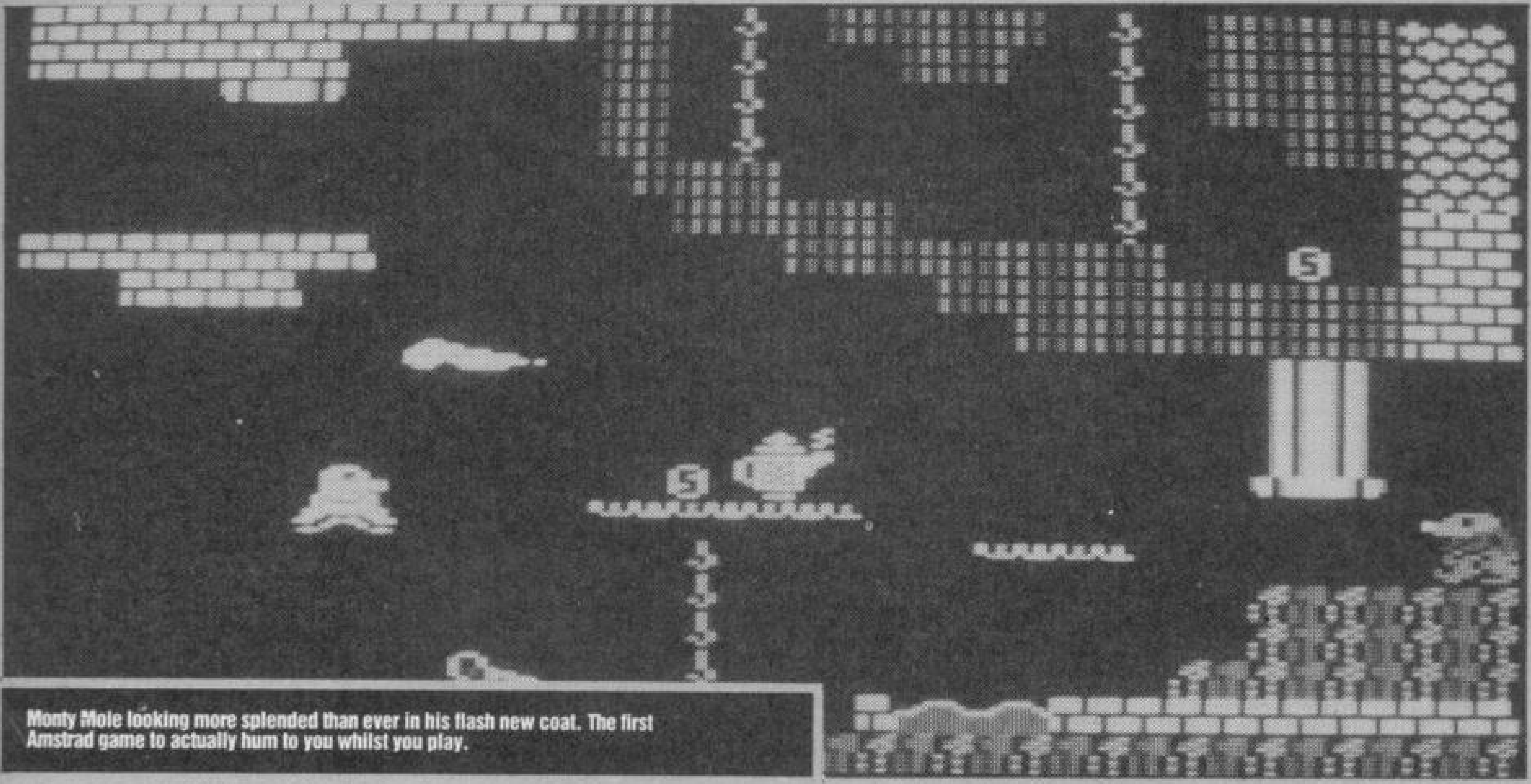


The Spectrum version of Frankie Goes to Hollywood on which the Amstrad version is based. Your big chance to pile up pleasure points and become a real person.

Some sneak views from inside a Zoid's head. Can you get your mind round its computer?



ICK IN YOUR STOCKING



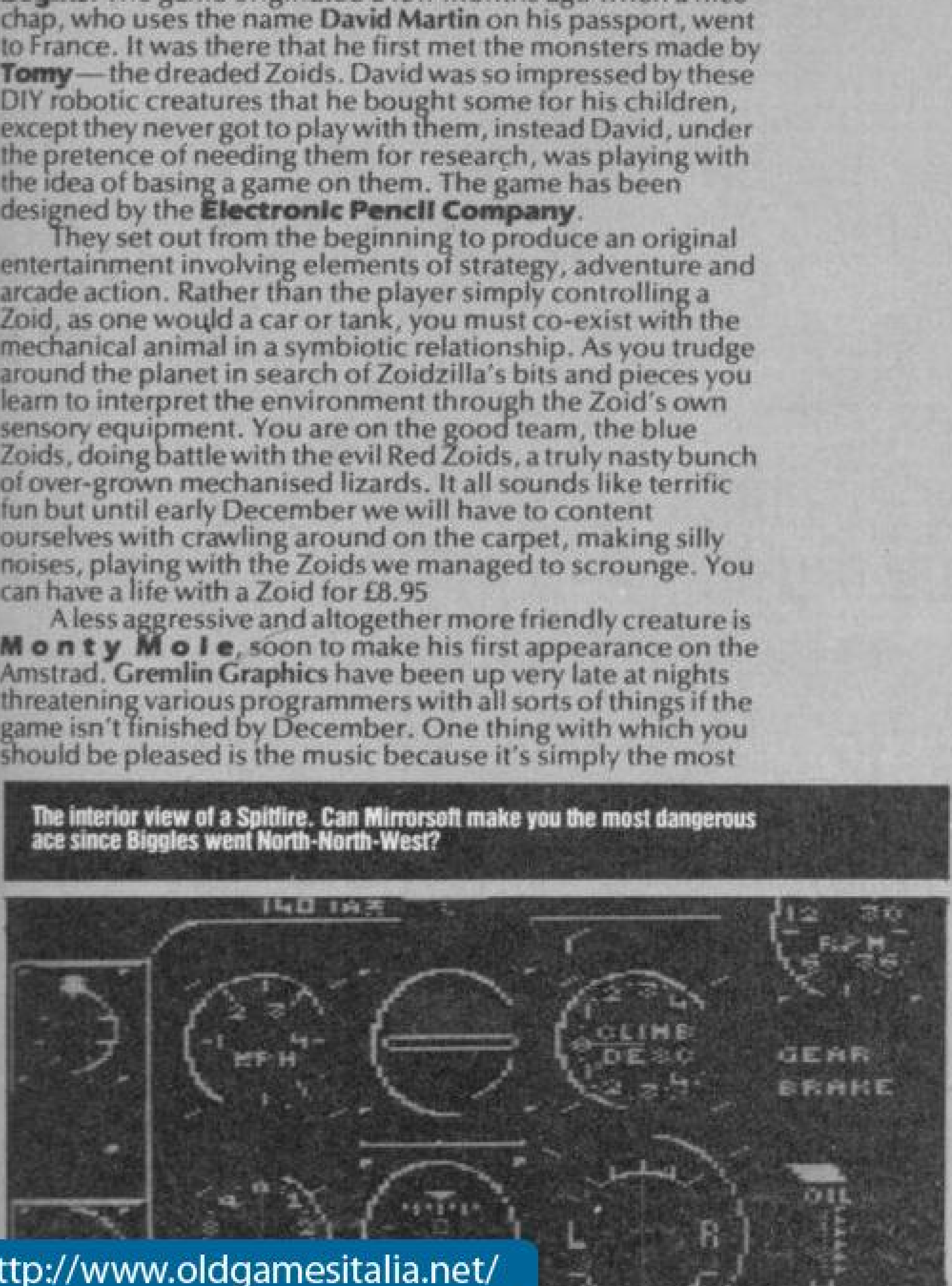
Monty Mole looking more splended than ever in his flash new coat. The first Amstrad game to actually hum to you whilst you play.

One game which has been causing more than its fair share of mental anguish is **Martech's Zoids: The Battle Begins**. The game originated a few months ago when a nice chap, who uses the name **David Martin** on his passport, went to France. It was there that he first met the monsters made by **Tomy** — the dreaded Zoids. David was so impressed by these DIY robotic creatures that he bought some for his children, except they never got to play with them, instead David, under the pretence of needing them for research, was playing with the idea of basing a game on them. The game has been designed by the **Electronic Pencil Company**.

They set out from the beginning to produce an original entertainment involving elements of strategy, adventure and arcade action. Rather than the player simply controlling a Zoid, as one would a car or tank, you must co-exist with the mechanical animal in a symbiotic relationship. As you trudge around the planet in search of Zoidzilla's bits and pieces you learn to interpret the environment through the Zoid's own sensory equipment. You are on the good team, the blue Zoids, doing battle with the evil Red Zoids, a truly nasty bunch of over-grown mechanised lizards. It all sounds like terrific fun but until early December we will have to content ourselves with crawling around on the carpet, making silly noises, playing with the Zoids we managed to scrounge. You can have a life with a Zoid for £8.95

A less aggressive and altogether more friendly creature is **Monty Mole**, soon to make his first appearance on the Amstrad. **Gremlin Graphics** have been up very late at nights threatening various programmers with all sorts of things if the game isn't finished by December. One thing with which you should be pleased is the music because it's simply the most superb music we have yet heard on Straddles and, what's more, it plays all the way through the game. The music is necessary to calm your nerves since the game is a very demanding arcade adventure with lots of very nasty and cunning traps for you to guide the first ever multi-coloured Monty through. **Monty on the Run** will be on sale by the beginning of December for £8.95 on tape and £12.95 on disk.

The interior view of a Spitfire. Can Mirrorsoft make you the most dangerous ace since Biggles went North-North-West?



Earlier on in the month **Mirrorsoft** sent me the best excuse to don the old leather helmet and goggles I have had in a long while. **Spitfire** is a realistic simulation of a legendary aircraft. Excited wasn't the word. There I was settled in the cockpit with the flaps down, brakes on and waiting for the green flare. Then, out of the blue came the bad news, this version had no bandits. After a quick sortie over the fields of Kent I climbed sorrowfully down from the cockpit with no hope of getting my DSO this issue. But judging by what I had seen this is a game for which the flying chaps are bound to be scrambling. The cockpit interior is excellent but once airborne you are bound to spend most of your time in the other screen mode, the exterior view, keeping your eyes peeled for the enemy. Don't worry if you have never flown before the Spitfire is a very forgiving aircraft and Mirrorsoft are including some valuable tips on flying and air-to-air combat in particular. The training course and opportunity for heroism costs £9.95 on cassette and £12.95 on disk.

The final game which I have been waiting for with baited breath is Ocean's **Frankie Goes To Hollywood**. When the game was released on the Spectrum and Commodore it was striking for the original approach the game designers, Denton Designs, had adopted. In short the object is to explore the game scoring points to achieve the status of real personage. You begin the game as an ordinary boring person living in Everydaysville and the transition is made by sampling the delights, and the consequences, of the modern world's temptations. If you survive the experience and qualify you will be allowed to enter the **Pleasure Dome** and seek ultimate fulfillment. **Frankie** is such a deep game full of sub-games, puzzles and problems that you may be lucky if you ever get out of it. The pleasure hunters among you would be well advised to look out for this when it's released.

Of course by the time the next issue comes along we will have reviewed these games but, no doubt, still be suffering from that dreadful mental state as we wait in suspense for the next batch. Never mind, by then the storage heaters might be working . . . **PLEASE.**

JEREMY (Give me back my Zoid) **SPENCER**

PLAYING WITH GRANDFATHER'S ABACUS

FEW software houses have encountered the success that GARGOYLE GAMES has enjoyed and remained in the background of the industry. It's not that the people behind the company are so secretive, just that they feel their market isn't interested in them personally because they aren't teenage wizzkids. So ROBIN CANDY and ROGER KEAN hitched a ride up the M5 to investigate the creators of such computer heroes as Cuchulainn the Great and more recently Commander John Kepler Marsh, GREG FOLLIS, ROY CARTER and TED HEATHCOTE.

The Gargoyle Games triad, left to right: Greg Follis, Ted Heathcote and Royston Carter.

King Street, Dudley is unprepossessing and busy. Far from being some gilded cathedral to computer art, complete with gruesome figurines attached to the high corners, the headquarters of Gargoyle Games is on the third floor of a modest, four-floor brick and concrete office block with an insurance company just below it and the smell of disinfectant haunting the cold stairways. The space consists of an office for Ted, who does the selling, a writing room for Greg and Roy, and a stock room with some games and boxes of toys. The toys are important.

The computer industry has always been associated with wizzkids who discovered computers overnight and made a fortune but Gargoyle Games' graduation into the home computer market has been a different pan of chips altogether. It all started about seventeen years ago in a computer research department where Royston (his full name, though Roy will do) and Greg worked for a large services bureau. This entailed them working at the larger end of the computer market and gradually throughout the years they've come down in machine size, though Greg admits that the mini computers they worked on weren't necessarily more powerful than the home micros today.

'The first one I started on,' he says, 'had the same power as an Amstrad and wouldn't have fit in this room, it was an 8K machine, an ICL 1901. It was very slow. We used to play Grandfather's Abacus on it. That's how it all started, I suppose,' he adds, referring to games.

'No you were hatched,' quips Roy disproving the myth that Greg is the only one with an operative larynx. In fact listening to these two is like watching two stand-up comedians.

'I started on computers at a company called Hewitts,' continues an unperturbed Greg Follis. 'I was employed by them as a programmer in the central computer. I worked as a programmer for a few years until they decided my talents might be more usefully employed in analysis. I asked "What's the money like?" They said, "It's better," so I said, "I'm an analyst"'. Greg's new job brought him more into contact with Roy. 'When we started, we didn't like each other very much, I can't remember why — well I can, I can remember exactly . . . '

It was nothing to do with you at all,' snaps back Roy.

'You didn't like me!

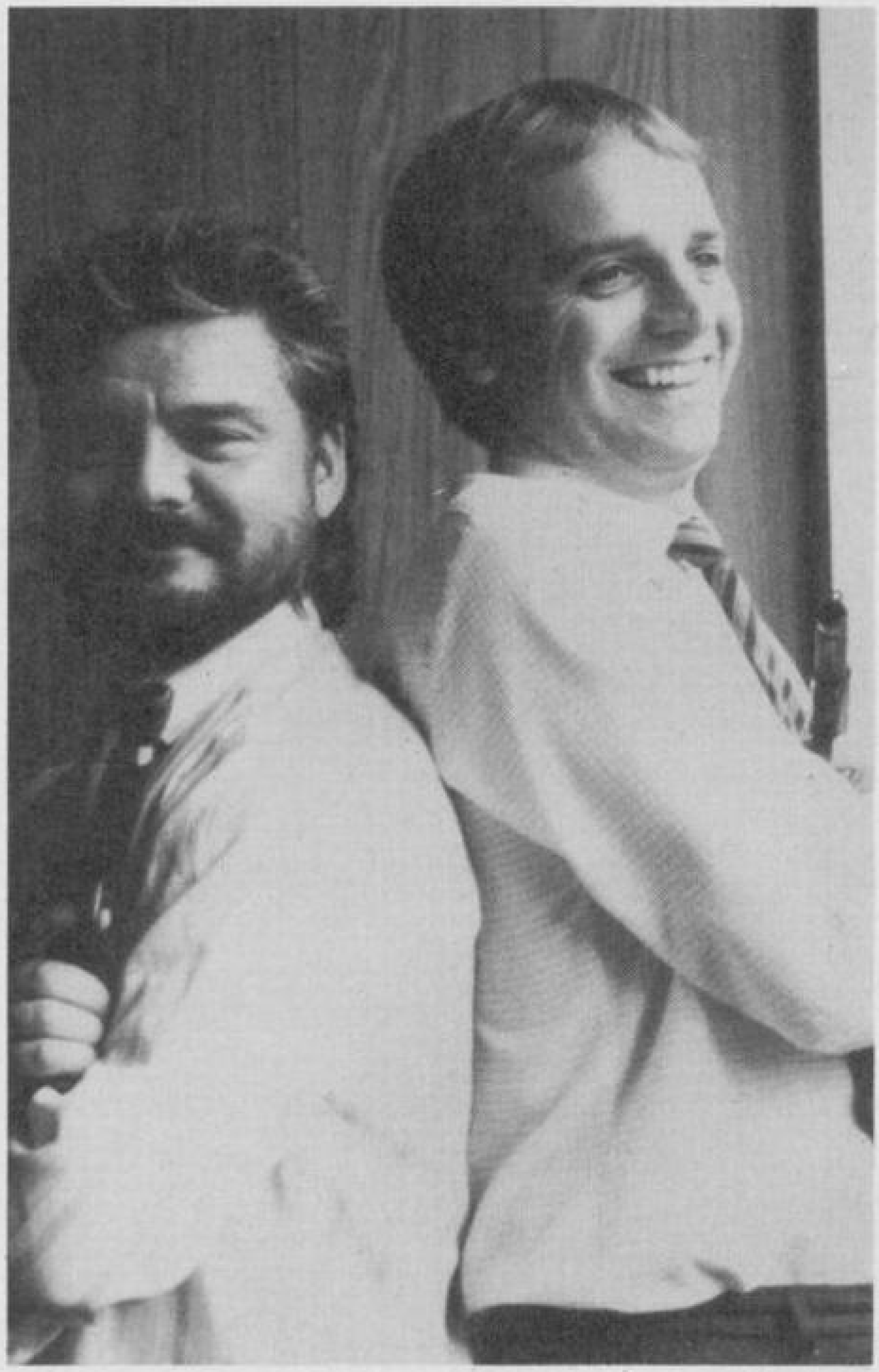
'That's right, and you didn't like me!'

Having established this hate relationship, they ended up getting together over a computer program and decided what everyone knew all along — they liked each other, and because they had a lot of fun working on the program they decided that if they could be in the same department it would mean that they could have a lot more fun. So they developed a brillant scheme.

'We invented this new department called New Products-Research and' Development,' continues Greg, 'The management said, "What a great idea! You can make up new products", which of course we never did. We actually got our own office, I suspect simply because we had a lot of fun and made a lot of noise which never actually stopped us with the work we were doing, but stopped everybody else working. But we had an awful lot of fun, more fun than we have now. We did eventually write some very good programs for them in the end, one of which was fairly important, which they've just started selling, something that we felt should have been sold three or four years ago.'

They had been working for the company for around 15 years when press rumours that teenage 'programmers' were earning fortunes prodded their own feelings about getting on and prompted them to turn their attention to games outside daily business work. At this point Ted Heathcote, long term friend of Greg's, was roped in to sell games for the envisaged firm and book advertising. Feeling that they could duplicate the standard of software presently on the market without any massive financial (or time) commitment of any sort they dived straight in at the deep end with their first game Ad Astra.

'The thing that actually attracted us to games was that it was a method to make money that we could afford,' says Greg. 'We both have mortgages and commitments that you can't throw away. We couldn't have done it any other way because we simply didn't have the backing. We had been involved in business, though, and knew some of the pitfalls. At the time we were still working in the New Products Department, so Ad Astra was developed in our spare time. Consequently it took nine months to develop which was an appallingly long time. We could put Ad Astra together in a few weeks nowadays.'



Follis and Carter in playful mood — the guns are for sniping passing security guards.

Ad Astra only appeared on the Spectrum, and the fledgling magazine, CRASH, was mildly surprised to find a young, promising software house so near to home. The game rated 80% with particular recognition of the Graphics, which at the time, were stunning. As soon as Ad Astra was released work on Tir Na Nog began. Contrary to popular belief, Tir Na Nog's origins do not lie in Fighting Fantasy.

'One day after releasing Ad Astra I wrote this routine which showed a character walking in a scrolling background, Roy recalls. Greg thought it 'looked nice', so then they looked around for a scenario which fitted the character.

'Eventually we found Cuchulainn and so Tir Na Nog was born.'

With the exception of Ad Astra, all of Gargoyle's games have carefully worked out plots which lend an almost unique atmosphere to the game. It is this atmosphere and the intricate problems that make games like Marsport classics.

'The apparent literary content of our storylines comes about simply because we enjoy reading stories,' Greg says modestly. 'We make stories that we enjoy. We make stories that seem to be the tip of the iceberg, so you always have the impression that there was a lot more going on that you didn't know about, and the resultant effect is that you are completing the story as you complete the game, something like a movie where the outcome is up to you. That is what we're aiming for, a true computer movie that is realistic. And we like to think that we achieve that in our games. I think a lot of adventure type stuff needs a story behind it, and fantasy material like Lord of the Rings, can provide an ethos to build problems and work out a taxing game.'

Greg and Roy work closely together. 'We get an idea for a scenario and then make up the problems as we go along, two thirds of the game's ideas are my creation the rest come mainly from Royston. Our next game Sweevo's World, however, is aimed more at the arcade market but it still fits into the Marsport†Siege of Earth trilogy, scenario. The game is intended to a bit of fun. If people play it and say "that was fun" then the game has achieved the purpose for which it was designed. The industry is far too serious now. It needs more fun injected into it, after all it is an entertainment industry.'

On the thorny subject of piracy Gargoyle Games have been almost alone in preferring to concentrate on perfecting a program rather than spend the time developing protection routines for it. Roy is quite forceful on this point, especially when it comes to discussing how many potential sales are lost through illegal copying. 'I would suggest *that we lose 50% of potential sales on every game* **not** *through piracy but by* **not** *having adequate PR. That's a fairly reasonable figure. Protection routines are obviously directed towards the odd few hackers that are around, but who cares if they know what your code is? I can't see that it is that important if someone knows what your code is. There is no way of stopping tape-to-tape copying.'*

After Sweevo's World *Gargoyle intend returning to the more serious game with the second installment in the Siege of Earth trilogy,* Fornax. *The format for this will be totally different from anything that Gargoyle have done before. Although there will be still be various problems which have to be overcome to complete the game, the presentation will be radically different. Greg suggests that* Fornax *will probably end up as a mixed media game, perhaps using icons and / or sentence input using semantic analysis of sentences rather than syntactic — this will be quite new. Before starting Gargoyle they had been sent on artificial intelligence courses where they learned certain elements of AI which Greg and Roy now hope to incorporate into later games to form what Greg calls a sort of cross between* Dun Darach *and 'Crossroads'. But whatever turns up in* Fornax *you can be sure that it will have plenty of animation and beautiful graphics along with intricate puzzles.* Fornax *should turn out to be innovative while still being fun, the ingredients Gargoyle feel are necessary to make a hit game.*

'There's a lot of new ideas about at the moment,' says Greg. 'It's very difficult, but you have to constantly learn from previous hits released by other software houses. I would be quite happy to turn out Dun Darachs *but there's a market out there and say 50% of it is buying* Daley Thompson's Decathlon *so you've got to go with the market trend. We have plenty of ideas which we know we could develop but time isn't on our side. We've got to release a game every few months in order to live. If we had six months to develop a game we could turn out something at the end of that time that would demolish the competition but we've all got mortgages to pay. In order to translate our ideas into software form we would probably need an Amstrad 6349!*

'Before we can develop true mega games we have to expand, to employ a few people to take away the things that take up so much of our time — a person to answer the phones would be a real boon as would someone to write some of the less complex but time-consuming routines in our games. There is also the possibility of us stopping the manufacturing side and becoming a development house similar to Denton Designs,' he says looking wistfully at Roy and Ted. 'That isn't a bad idea, it would take out the task of PR straight away.'

The wicked glint in Greg Follis' eye tells you where those puzzles come from.

'Tell him about the football boot, Greg.'

Mention of Denton Designs leads us to talk about the old Imagine and the state of the post-boom industry. Gargoyle entered the games industry shortly before the crash of Imagine but even though doom and gloom is spouted by the media they believe computer games are here to stay.

'I Don't think that computer games are a fad, they're an industry,' Roy claims. 'It's like TVs and videos are not a fad, it is all encompassed by the electronic entertainment industry and will always be maintained. Eventually Newsfield may not publish magazines but someone will. The industry may change, for example video shops may become laser holograph lenders, the medium will change but the concept of electronic entertainment will continue because it's big business and you can be sure that we will be helping it along.'

To relieve the tension of programming and planning ahead, the backroom of the office is dedicated to toys. The remnants of their programming days with Hewitts litter the floor in boxes of varying sizes, guns of differing calibre wait to be fired once in a while at passing security guards.

'We used to have terrific fun with these,' Greg laughs, holding up a tatty football boot.

'Tell them about the football boot, Greg,' Roy prompts. Greg glances at it as though surprised to see it in his hand.

'Ah, the football boots. A professor friend of ours sent us a pair of football boots (don't know why), which we promptly sent back. He then gave us a load of clues as to their whereabouts which eventually led to us going to Ibiza to dig up a football boot. We will have to hide this one and give him a set of clues to find it again.'

Leaving the tiny offices, with their disinfectant-smelling stairways and a playroom full of mechanical fly swatters, whoopee cushions and toy guns, I am left with the distinct impression that it is their creators and not Cuchulainn and Marsh who are truly the heroes. The spirit of the software industry lies in such small but professional outfits who, by hard work and excellent products, are leading the way towards an electronic environment where reality and fantasy will be indistinguishable. It may not have been a world-shattering event, but for the Amstrad and computer games in general, the hatching of the Gargoyle was a truly remarkable event.

By Robin Candy, with help from Roger Kean who took the pictures when he was told to.

MARSPORT

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Decipher a code and WIN A PANTHER DATAC PRINTER

AMTIX! COMPETITION

The **PANTHER DATAC DX 109 DOT MATRIX PRINTER** retails at over £200 in the shops and its price is more indicative of the features of printers that costs in excess of £300. It would seem to be quite popular amongst Amstrad users too, judging by the response it had at the recent Amstrad show. Here is a brief summary of the features that it offers:-

- **Friction feed and tractor feed — it can handle cut sheets, roll paper or sprocket paper.**
- **1152 Byte input buffer**
- **Underlining, elongated characters, compressed characters and Bit image print modes**
- **Compact, 4M character life cartridge type ribbon**
- **Bi-directional logic-seeking carriage**
- **Less than 60db noise level — you could use it during Crossroads and not annoy your mum and dad!**

We are giving one away, to the reader who can help us solve a small problem:-

We asked for someone to write us a little story that we could use in the magazine. A writing minion set off and wrote one but unfortunately when passing it from his computer to ours all the letters took on new values and the story came out as a Caesar code. This is a cipher where all the letters are displaced by a certain distance. What you must do is to break the code, (you could use your Amstrad to help you) and then answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

Xwn mjh, rw JVCRG! ljbcun, j bcajwpn, pwjaunm urccun vjw jaarenm fqx mnvjwmnm cx bnn cqn trwp. R fxdum bynjt cx trwp Axpna, qn bjrm, R qjen cqn bnlanc xo ncnawju uron. 'Fqx vrpqc hxd kn?', jbtnm cqn bnwcah xw mdch. 'Cqn Vrpqch Vjbcnabxw', qn anyurnm frcq j ouxdarbq xo qrb pwjaunm urccun orwpnab. Cqn bnwcah, bdrcjkuh rvyanbbnm, bldaarnm xoo cx cnuu cqn trwp fqx mduh jaarenm. 'Fqjc rb cqn bnlanc xo ncnawju uron', qn jbtnm. Cqn Vrpqch Vjbcnabxw pjcqnanm qrvbnuo dy cx pren cqn jra xo jw juu rvyxacjwc knrwp jwm anyurnm, 'Tnny kanjcqrwp!'

The person with the first correct answer out of the bag on January 30th will become the proud owner of the Panther, but you'll have to supply your own cage and raw meat for it.

Answers on a postcard (or back of a sealed envelope) please, to DATAC COMPETITION, AMTIX! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE GNARLED OLD MAN?

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF ETERNAL LIFE?

KOKOTONI WILF

'Kokotoni Wilf is an arcade adventure whose undisguised intention is to steal the title of "best arcade adventure program bar none" from Jet Set Willy'.

As Kokotoni Wilf you must recover all the pieces of the legendary Dragon Amulet (which has been scattered throughout time) for your master the great magician, Ulrich.

Throughout the quest Wilf comes up against many dangers from huge lumbering prehistoric dinosaurs, to hostile alien robots, but the reward for recovering all the pieces warrants the risk.

The 48K program features a number of major advances over Jet Set Willy. The games designer, Elite, stresses that each of the games 60 plus screen settings is genuinely high resolution, as opposed to psuedo hi-res, and doesn't require a title to explain what you're looking at. Furthermore, the sprite characters are of cartoon quality and exhibit their own personalities.

Impressive claims. Jet Set Willy fans will no doubt feel both sceptical and intrigued ......

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STRANGELOOP

Virgin Games, £8.95 cass
Author: The Gang of Five

STRANGELOOP

The first space-age arcade/adventure hits the Amstrad with this 250 (25x10) screen epic. A long forgotten robot-controlled factory situated on the edge of a solar system sets the scene.

The factory has worked away automatically for a hundred years, the robots harmlessly carrying out their menial tasks until now. A powerful alien force, possibly jealous of Earth's riches, has invaded the factory and reprogrammed the robots so they can destroy our planet.

Your job is to enter this hostile environment and discover the Control Centre where you can disable all the automatons. In a climate suited to robots you have to fight your way through zero gravity, diverse temperatures, floating swarf and through the many weird and wonderful screens to achieve this.

Armed with only a space suit and a laser you have a formidable task ahead of you. There is a jet cycle for you to use once you have found and collected it. Collect it? Well, the robot guarding it isn't going to give it up easily, not without a few bullets being bounced about, anyway.

Once you have got the jet cycle your mission can really begin. Don't spend too much time admiring the view, get to a pipe and move up or down it (if it isn't blocked off).

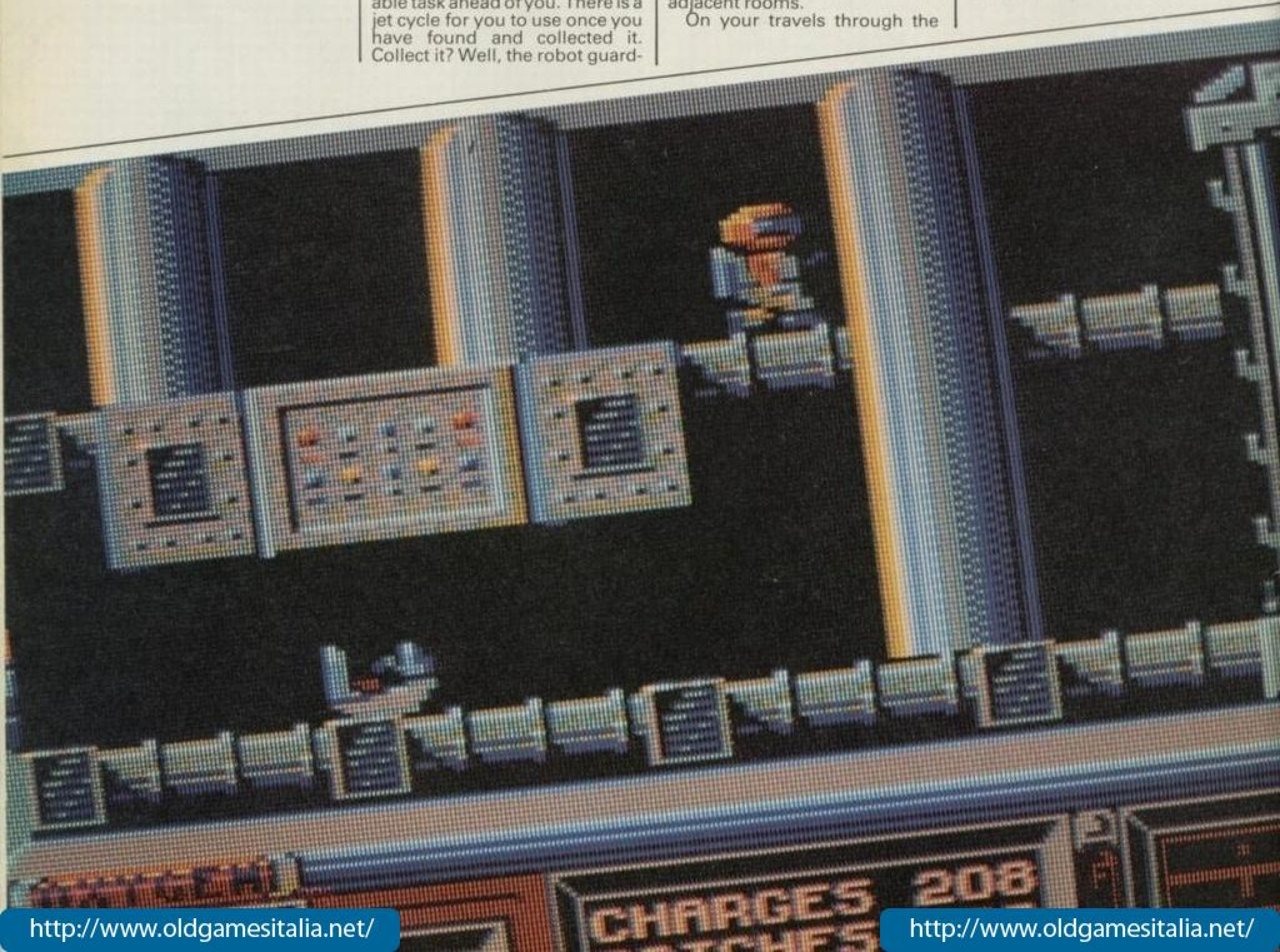
At the bottom right of the screen there is a scanner/map. This shows the adjacent two rooms in each direction, a total of 25. It doesn't reveal what is in the rooms but you can clearly see the entrances and exits to them, so you are able to plan your moves ahead.

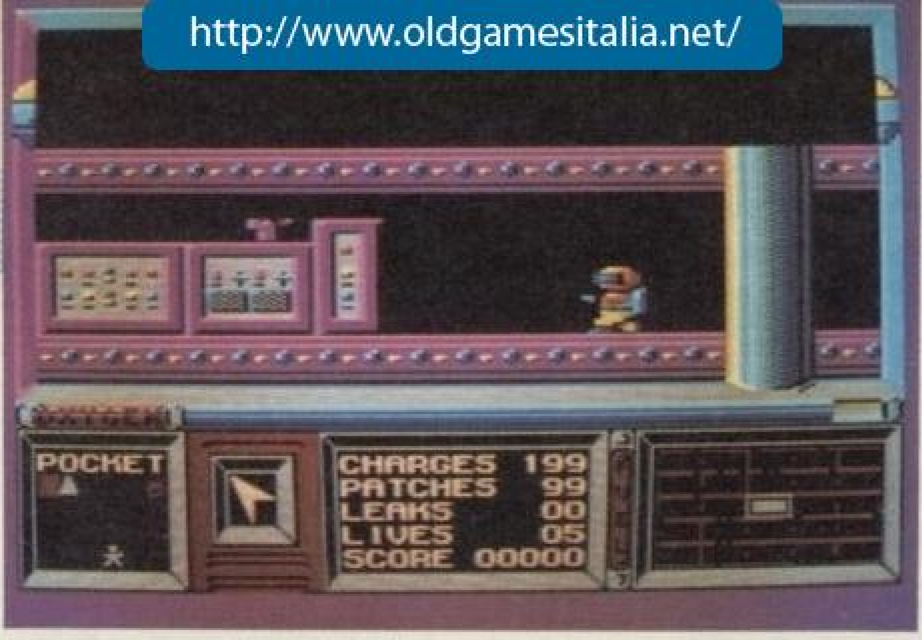
The pipes which link the various rooms are zero gravity lifts forming a large and complex system and allowing extensive exploration and access to most rooms. If there are no pipes then there are usually doors either in the left or right-hand walls which allow you to enter the adjacent rooms.

On your travels through the factory you see much old and abandoned machinery, some of which may still be working. There are CRUSHERS which clang up and down and flatten you if you're carless enough to stray under their mashers. Odd revolving SCOOPS grind away into the night and CONVEYOR BELTS, harmless but progress-slowing, trundle along their infinite paths. COMPUTERS, too, tick away the long hours to themselves, but most are purely a decorative part of the landscape . . .

There are also rooms containing large machines which although standing static may have mysterious purposes later on in the game. Large ELECTRICITY GENERATORS, a NUCLEAR REACTOR and its ENTRANCE ROOM are just a few of the highly deadly locations.

Some rooms contain odd robots which have escaped the





ravishings of the aliens and are still friendly, and these help you solve the game.

As you wander around the factory you might see an object lying around. Move over it and you automatically pick it up and it falls into your pocket. This pocket is represented by a box on screen. It shows what you have picked up. If want to examine the object more closely, press space-bar and a cursor appears in the box. Move the cursor over the object and press fire. You get a read-out telling you what the object actually is.

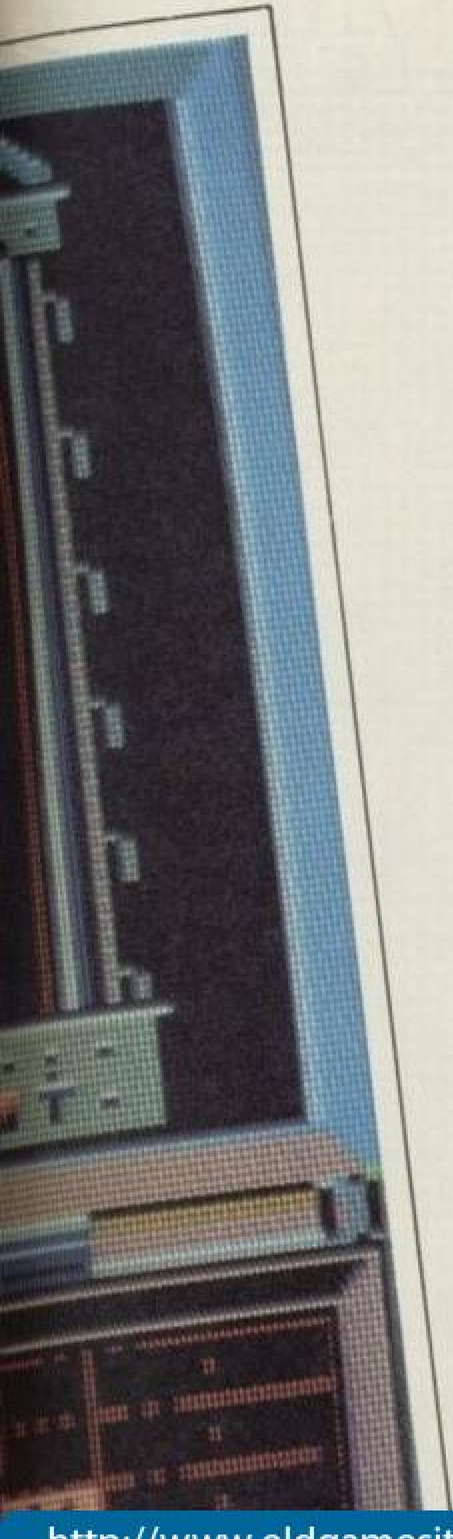
These objects have to be used to solve puzzles throughout the game, and the only way to complete this game is to use all the objects. At first you only find a few objects. But give one of these to the correct friendly robot and he gives you another object in return. Use this to solve another puzzle and you gain yet another piece! Eventually after solving many puzzles you should, hopefully, be able to gain access to the Control Centre and then disable the robots.

When you start the game you are given eight lives. You can't earn any extra lives but there are supplies littered around the factory which you can pick up to prolong your current life.

The main cause of death for your man is suffocation. Throughout the factory there are thousands of pieces of razor sharp SWARF floating around randomly. You have to shoot this flying debris: if you touch it it makes a leak in your space suit. This is indicated on screen. If you are carring some patches the puncture is automatically fixed. When you run out of patches, though, you start to lose oxygen.

The more punctures you have (up to a lethal maximum of 99) the faster you lose oxygen. The faster you lose oxygen the less time your man lives, so blast that swarf! Occasionally you come across a MEGASWARF. This giant swarf chases you at high speeds and gives your spacesuit more holes than a sieve.

If you want to map the game, the space bar pauses the action and tells you the location you're in. It does this by referring to the factory layout. The programmers have marked the top 0 to 9 and down the side A to Y. You can then work out your position in the factory: eg M2 (where you start) is in the bottom left hand region of the factory.



CRITICISM

1 **The Gang of Five established themselves with previous mega hit *Sorcery*. Now after a bit of a lull *Strangeloop* reaffirm's their identity within the software world as one of the best teams of software producers for the Amstrad. What is first so overly impressive is the graphic content and detail. Though of a totally different style to *Sorcery*'s impressive olde worlde type of display, *Strangeloop*'s presentation is just as impressive. The game is very good as well, bearing a lot more resemblance to the Commodore version thn the original appearance on the Spectrum. The puzzles set are entertaining and challenging. At first things are a bit hard but after finding the Vespa look-alike I found it a lot easier to traverse the ship. Solving *Strangeloop* with 250 screens to be explored is something of a challenge. I really like it and even though I feel *Sorcery* has the edge, this is one of the better releases to appear for quite a while. Definitely worth a look at.**

2 As soon as I saw *Strangeloop* on the Amstrad I knew it was heading for Accolade ratings. The graphics are well detailed with lots of colour, this gives a excellent impression of 3D. The animation of the enemies is fantastic, especially the beach ball and the hot water which bubbles away waiting for you to be boiled in it. Colour is well used on your ship, but this does result in a colour mixing. The sound is excellent with lots of echoing on the firing and explosions. The screen is very well laid out using the split-screen effect. My only complaint with this game is that it takes up too much time flicking from screen to screen — which probably can be forgiven seeing as they've got to shift 16K of screen around every few seconds. Overall this game is in my opinion just a bit better than the other versions and definitley the best from the Gang of five since *Sorcery*.

3 *I was always a biker at heart, but forced by cold weather and arthritic kneecaps to return to the lofty heights of public transport, I was impressed by* Strangeloop, *not so much for the good use of colour and clean graphics, but for the fact that I could go screaming around the screens like a space mod, with my old trusty parka substituted for a space suit. Although the game has potential I do not think it has been completely realised. After a while I found that it was possible to 'park' your jet scooter in places where you're completely stuck. The only way to get out is to die by running out of oxygen, a horrible way to go if not least because it takes a long time. Flicking between screens takes a just too long, probably just the effect of having to move so much screen memmory. The game is technically good and seems to have followed the hit game recipe to good effect, so it is sad that the game falls down a little for me because there is not enough depth to it.*

Presentation 85%
Superb loading screen.

Graphics 96%
Graphics even excell those in Scorcery

Sound 90%
Very realistic sound effects.

Playability 91%
Very easy game to get into, but beware the getting out isn't.

Addictive qualities 83%
A very difficult game to solve but a little too easy to stay alive, you rarely feel threatened.

Value for money 85%
A fair price for a state of the art game.

Overall 90%
Would have approached perfection if there had been a little more to do.

AN AMTIX! ACCOLADE

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Big J has eaten one of the NEC portables previously used to write the magazine. Candy has come to the conclusion that life is just one great big Z80 and has wrecked the office heating system in an attempt to improve staff efficiency by turning us into superconductors. Gary Liddon's clothes have been seen in the kitchen making a substance not quite, but almost completely unlike tea. Meanwhile, Mad Masterson, the Ludlow Leprechaun is training for his 25 yards badge — in Guinness ...

And sitting in his marble throne, surrounded by a moat of burning ZX81's, Killer Kean (Beelzebub to his mates) oversees his empire. At the snap of his fingers, Apricots burst into life and the unsuspecting minions are drawn to them like moths to a lightbulb. A nightmare far more terrifying than anything you have yet seen on your micro is going on as you read this — in AMTIX! Towers.

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You could win one of the twenty copies of the Genesis adventure creation system, which would allow you to implement your scenario as an adventure with text, graphics and sound. Who knows, enter this comp and you could take the first steps on the road to fame and fortune as an Adventure Programmer ....

I'm the only sane one left here you know. Yes I am. Nearly flipped for a while but everything's just ticketty-boo since I had that nice chat with the margarine policeman ...

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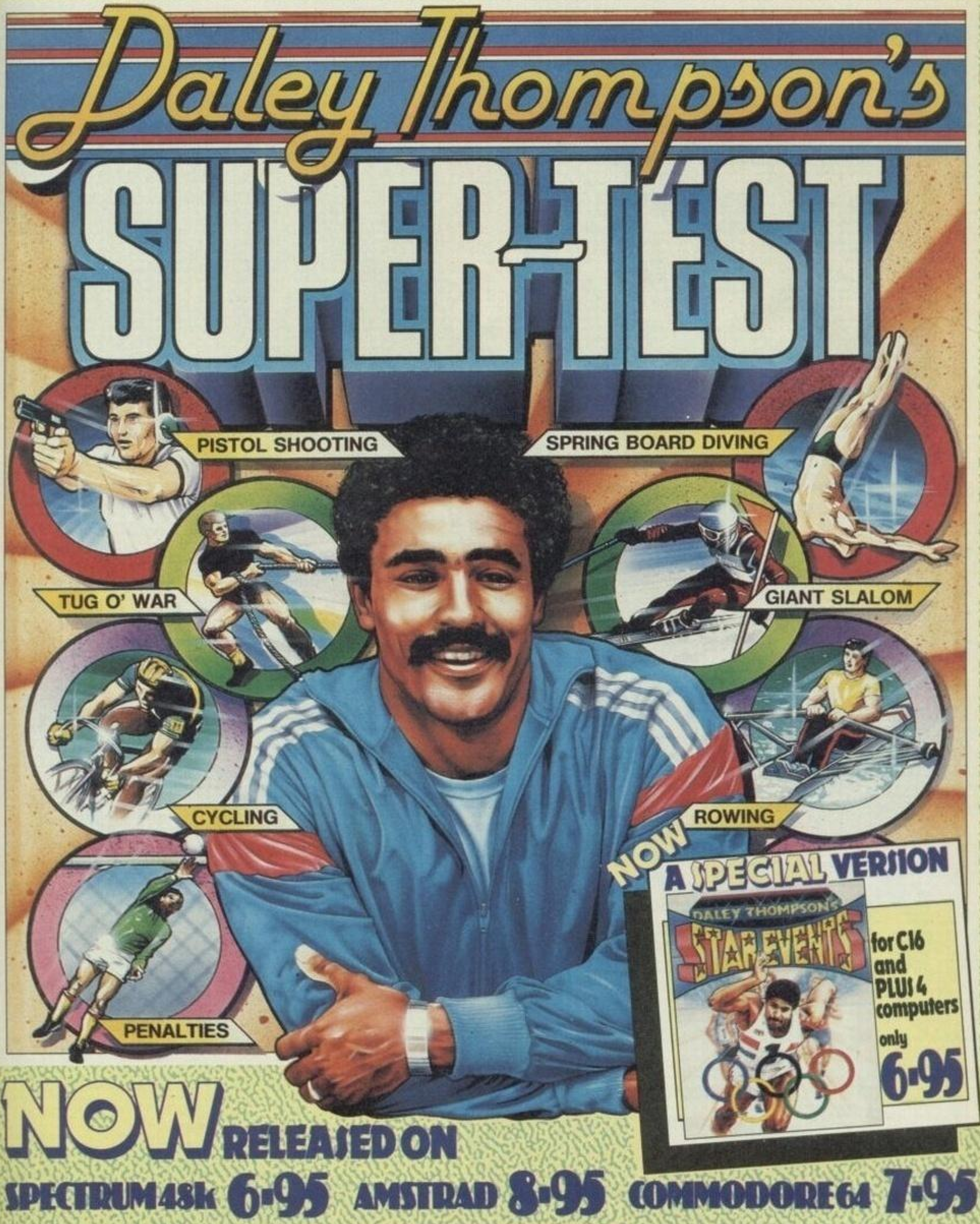
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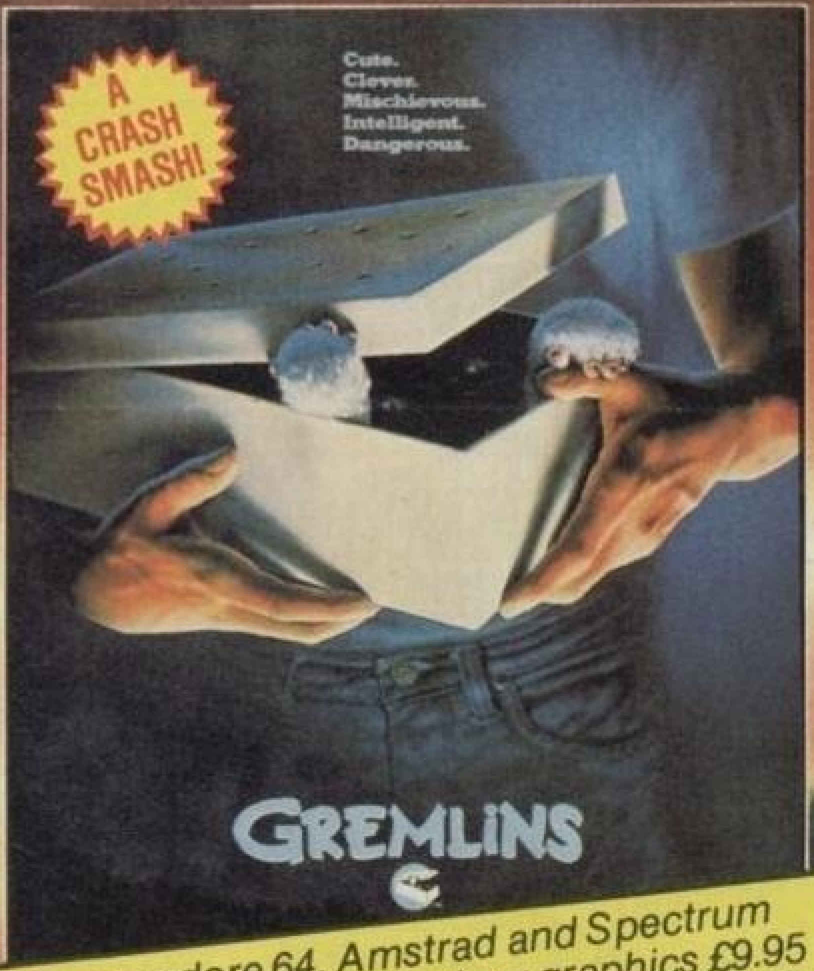
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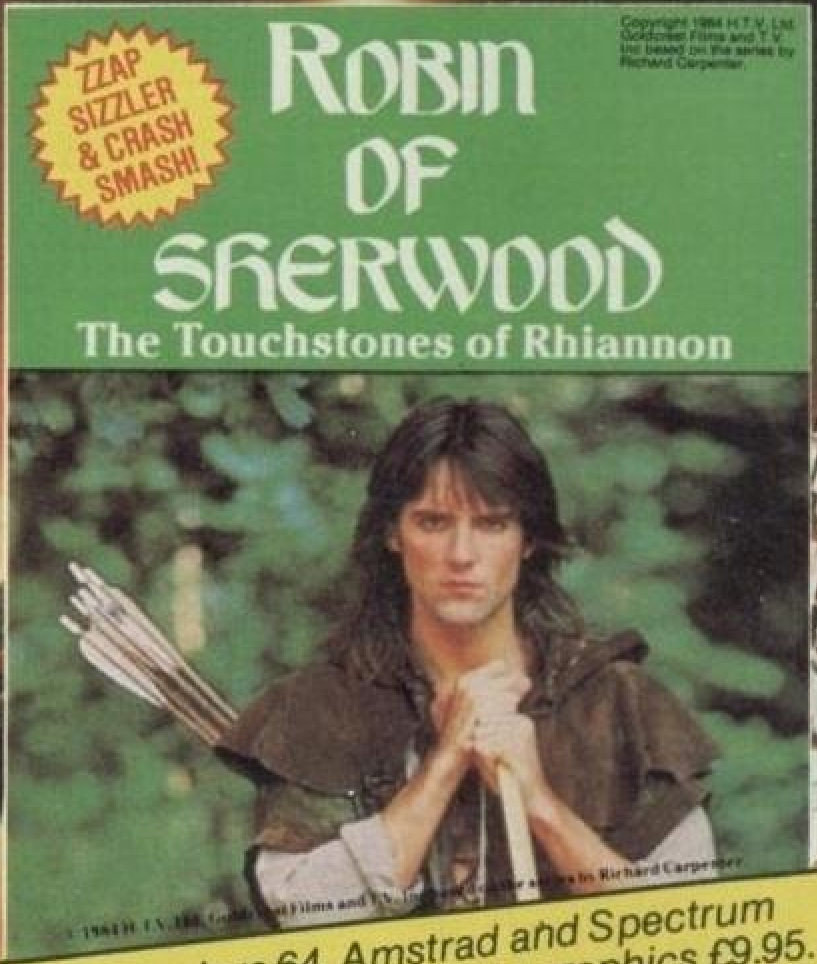
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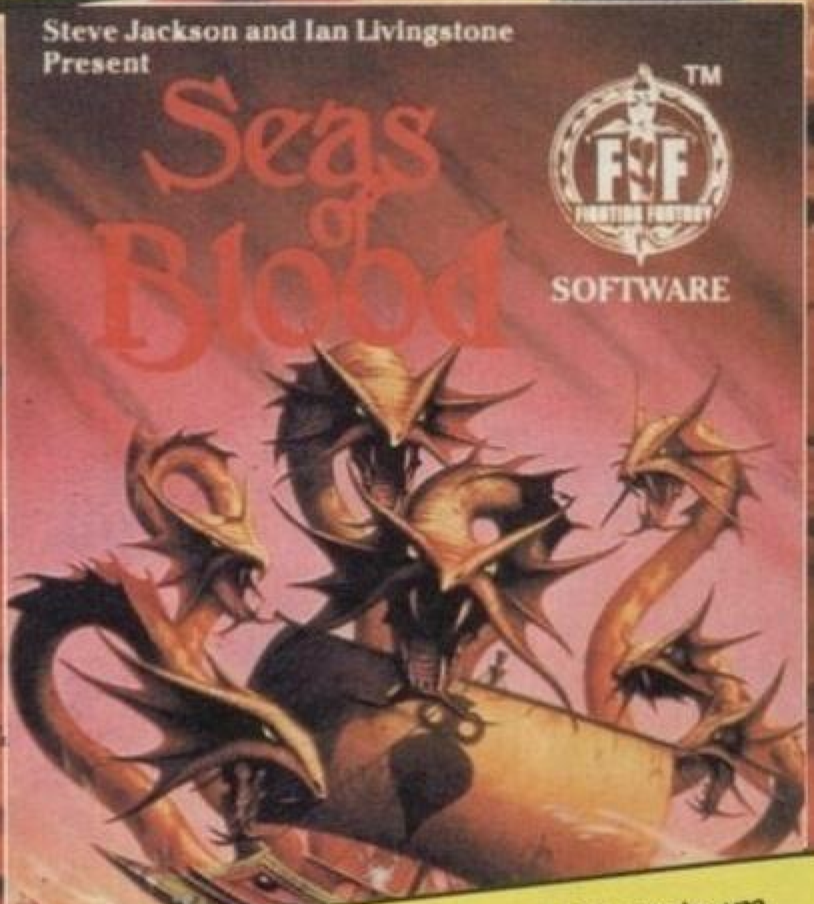
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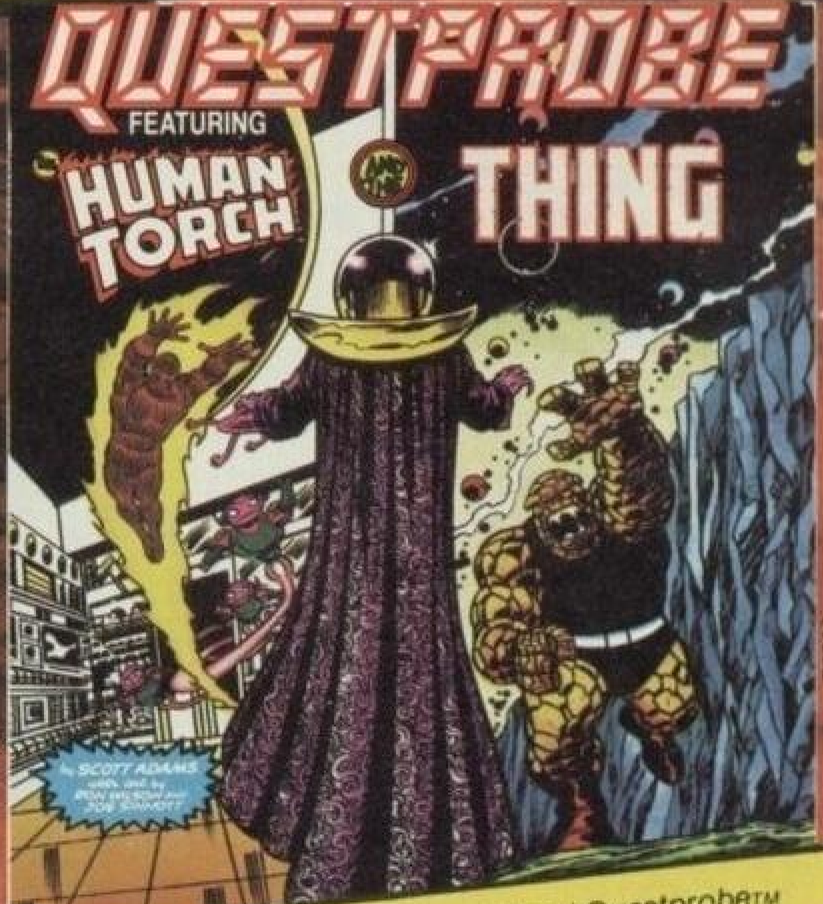
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02

WELCOME BACK MY FRIENDS TO THE SHOW THAT NEVER ENDS

The winter nights have drawn in. Or at least they have in Ludlow, where this poor minion is forced into a badly fitting leprechaun outfit and forced to work work in the shadow of the Ludlow gibbet day after day. It's the ideal time for adventuring (as if you lot need a reason) and enough new games are being released to keep even the thriftiest of you occupied during the frozen months.

I've been getting a number of letters either asking for help or offering hints on a variety of games. Although I would have liked to include them in this column, there was neither the space nor time. However, keep them coming in and I'll give them a reasonable amount of space next issue. Honest.

As usual, it's been a hectic month with too much to review and too little time to do it in. A few items have had to go by the wayside this issue, but you can be certain, I'll deal with them soon. As for what has made it to the column, this month; there's a three-in-one review of 8TH Day titles, a package tour horror story, a bad case of 'morning after' syndrome and the third part of a 25th century trilogy where just about every part of your inventory will cost you a fortune. Don't believe me? Read on, read on . . .

As it's the Christmas issue (please guys, don't stick me on that tree again — I'm a Leprechaun, not a . . . !), I thought I'd include a top ten adventure games for the Amstrad. This is only my choice and you're welcome to write and let me know your favourites. I can then compile your choices to get a readers' chart. Let's hear from you.

1. *Colossal Adventure* **Level 9**
2. *Snowball* **Level 9**
3. *The Hobbit* **Melbourne House**
4. *Lords of Midnight* **Beyond**
5. *Lords of Time* **Level 9**
6. *Red Moon* **Level 9**
7. *Marsport* **Gargoyle Games**
8. *Adrian Mole* **Level 9/ Mosaic Publishing**
9. *The Worm in Paradise* **Level 9**
10. *Mayday* **Database**

Hmm, dominated by Level 9 eh? Bound to cause complaints from Adventure International fans. Still, the disagreement will be healthy. These are just personal favourites chosen for their sheer enjoyment or nostalgia value, not in terms of technical excellence. *Mayday*? Well, I'm biassed. Be seeing you.

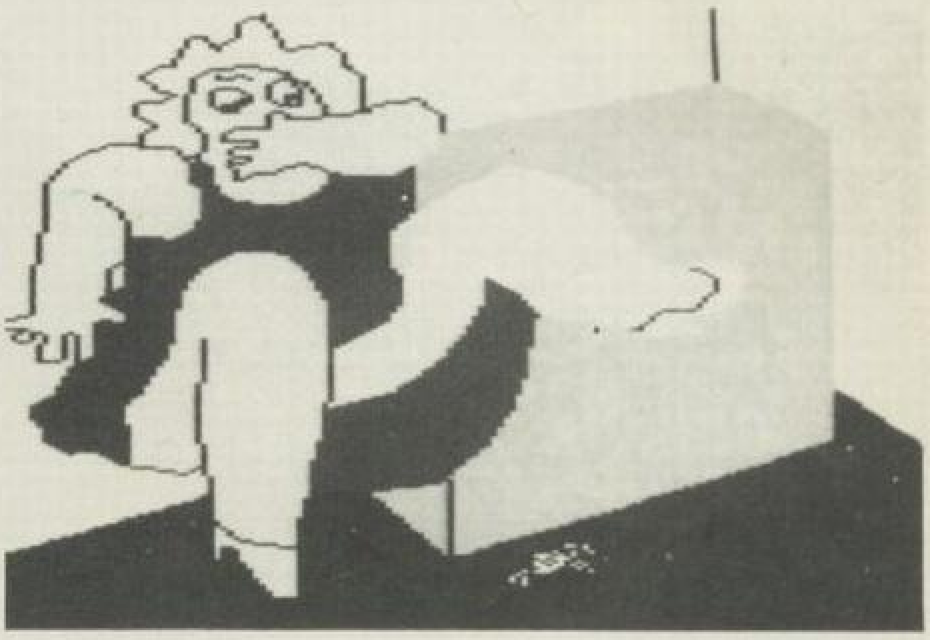
TERRORMOLINOS

Melbourne House, £7.95, cass

Latest offering from the people who brought you *The Hobbit* but in a very different vein from the Tolkienesque nightmares which previously haunted adventurers, is *Terrormolinos*. Written by the authors of the magnificently funny *Hampstead*, Peter Jones and Trevor Lee, it attempts to bring the 'saucy humour' of holiday postcards to the computer adventurer's attention. It's a Quilled game with graphics (supplied by Mike Robinson) in the typical postcard humour style.

You play the part of a family man from Slough, about to take his little tribe on holiday to a Spanish resort. All the problems of getting everything together before the taxi arrives to take everyone to the airport have to be resolved before the game proper begins. As the house is in the inevitable state of pre-holiday panic (including one member of the family still in the bath), this is no easy task. It also transpires that you are something of a 'Frank Spencer' (or is it Jeremy Spencer?) as far as DIY goes. Some of your most dreaded creations have to be overcome in order to get everything needed for the holiday.

Assuming Spain is reached successfully, there is a list of Spanish phrases on the instruction sheet which may be used for various necessities (such as booking a room). A nice touch. Most of the time, the screen has only pure text displayed, but whenever something fatal or particularly amusing occurs, the player is treated to a full colour illustration of the scene.



Of course, to do justice to the title, the holiday resort is absolutely nightmarish and has more than enough problems to keep the hardiest of adventurers worried. Absolutely nothing is dealt with seriously and nothing is straightforward or simple to achieve when it ought to be. Although being marketed heavily as a 'saucy humour' game, the satire is occasionally subtle and extremely witty.

As the game is Quilled, the player is limited to two word input. This shouldn't present too many problems however, as contrived text input isn't what's required in this game. On the other hand keeping track of the rest of the family is difficult and limiting. Your own family cause more problems than most of the other people you meet in the game.

As a typical package holiday, there are three excursions to go on. They present a whole series of problems themselves but surviving the trips can be rewarding. The main object of the game, however, is not just to keep the family intact and survive the holiday, but to take at least ten photos to prove you actually went on the two week trip. As your camera only contains twelve photos, there is little room for error.

When a photograph is successfully taken, it is displayed on the screen. It is also possible to review all the photos taken at any given point in the game (even after a fatal mistake). Some of the jokes and situations are funny, but others are contrived and there were times when I felt the program might have told me I had taken a dud photo simply because it did not have the option at that point. On the whole, however, I found the game to be an interesting diversion from the standard adventure offering and considering the complexity of controlling several characters, it worked quite well.

The sense of humour may not appeal to some but even without it, there are some interesting difficulties facing a player. There has also been a suggestion in the press, that this work is modelled closely on a similar game that was released some time ago by another company but failed to achieve much commercial success. Whether or not this is true, *Terrormolinos* is still a funny game with a clever use of graphics. Although by no means a bad addition to your collection, I preferred *Hampstead*'s wry wit and more poignant approach.

Atmosphere 74%
Plot 75%
Interaction 68%
Lastability 67%
Value for money 77%
Overall 78%

THE WORM IN PARADISE

Level 9, £9.95 cass

This is the third game in the Silicon Dream Trilogy, started by *Snowball* and continued with *Return to Eden*. A point made clear in the instructions however, and worthy of repetition here is that you need not have played either of the game's predecessors to complete this one.

For those unfamiliar with the Silicon Dream scenario, the game involves the human inhabitants of Eden, an Earth-like planet orbiting Eridani E. Set somewhere in the 25th century, the world is a strange one, run by robots. Whether the human inhabitants of the domed cities in this world are aristocrats freed from the tedium of manual labour or just pen pushing pets for the robot beaurocracy is a matter for speculation. One thing is certain. Eden is anything but.

Eden is a different vision of George Orwell's 1984 scenario, in a way. Humans (and there are few enough of them around) started off by building machines and eventually robots. Robots built more machines and yet more sophisticated robots and . . . Robots now (effectively) build humans. They grow them, actually. There are no taxes (hurrah). There are lots of fines (Booh). The system, being robotic, is incorruptible. However, it is possible to take advantage of some aspects of the bureaucracy. If somebody is ill and you report it, you will be rewarded (they will be fined) and other, similar reports are financially beneficial. It's a weird place to have an adventure.

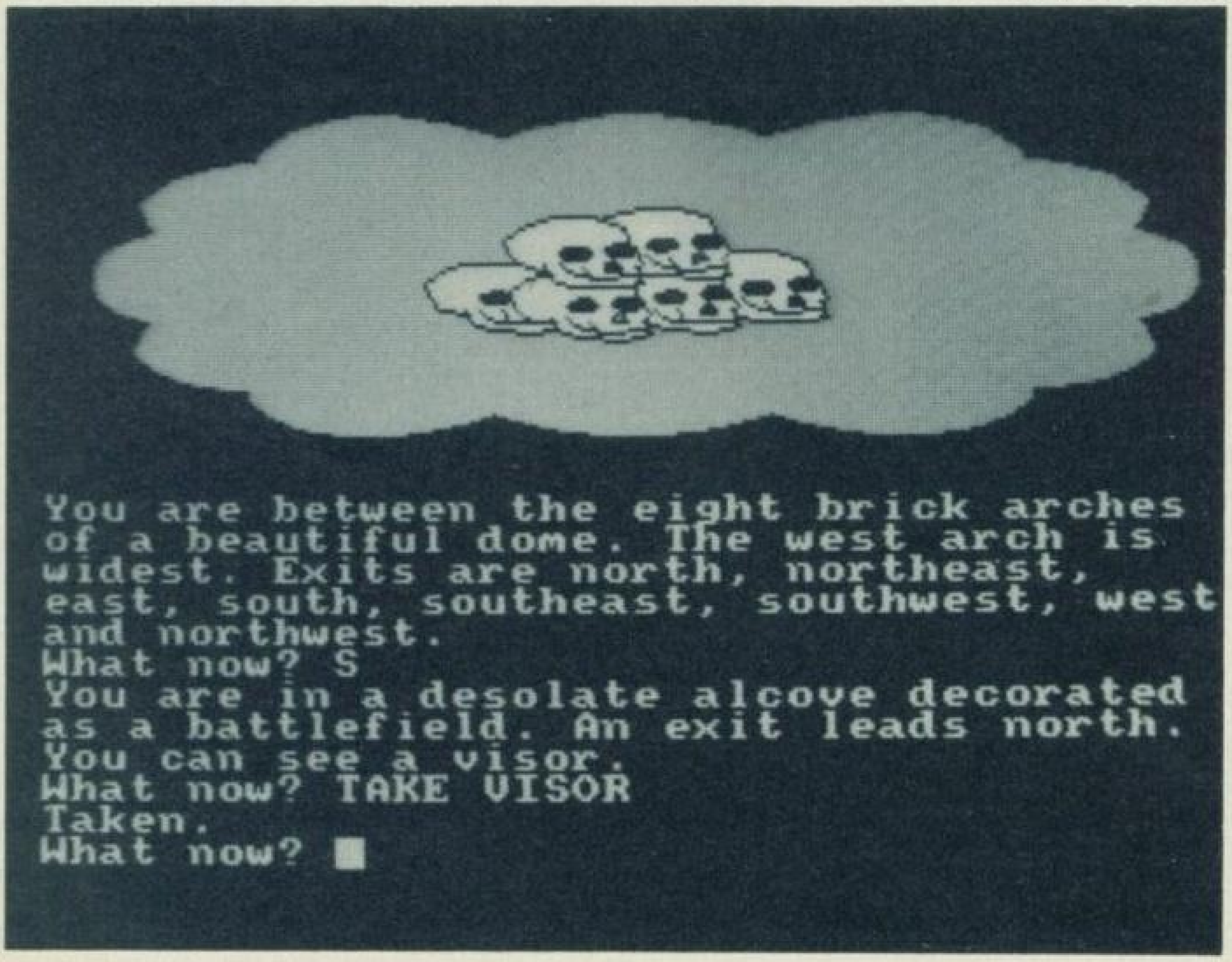
When the adventure begins, you are in the first and smallest of Eden's cities, Enoch. A feature reminiscent of Infocom's *Sorcery* is used as you are in the middle of a dream sequence (rather interesting, considering . . .). However this dream sequence proves to be far less intimidating than Infocom's. After waking, there is a 'welcome to the pleasure dome' as that's the complex you're in! Is there no end to this inspiration?

Exploring the complex can lead to a variety of interesting circumstances including eating pizzas and buying pet dogs. It is possible to leave the complex and explore the city beyond and this can lead to trouble with the city's transport system. It brings a whole new meaning to the word maze. Once you're in, it's unlikely you will escape without first deciphering the cryptically colour coded floor.

Everything you are likely to obtain will cost you credits, or 'creds' as they are simply known. A player's current number of creds may checked by examining a tattoo on the wrist, an LCD display which gives the current time as well.

Level 9 are making a lot of boasts about this game. It employs a 1000 word vocabulary; better than 50% text compression; and a highly efficient buffer which allows type-ahead. Apart from all this, the parser now accepts full sentence, multi-command input and recognises the use of 'it' and references to items of background scenery. This does not always work as well as one might hope but then, even the extent to which the new features do work is remarkable considering they operate in a cassette based environment.

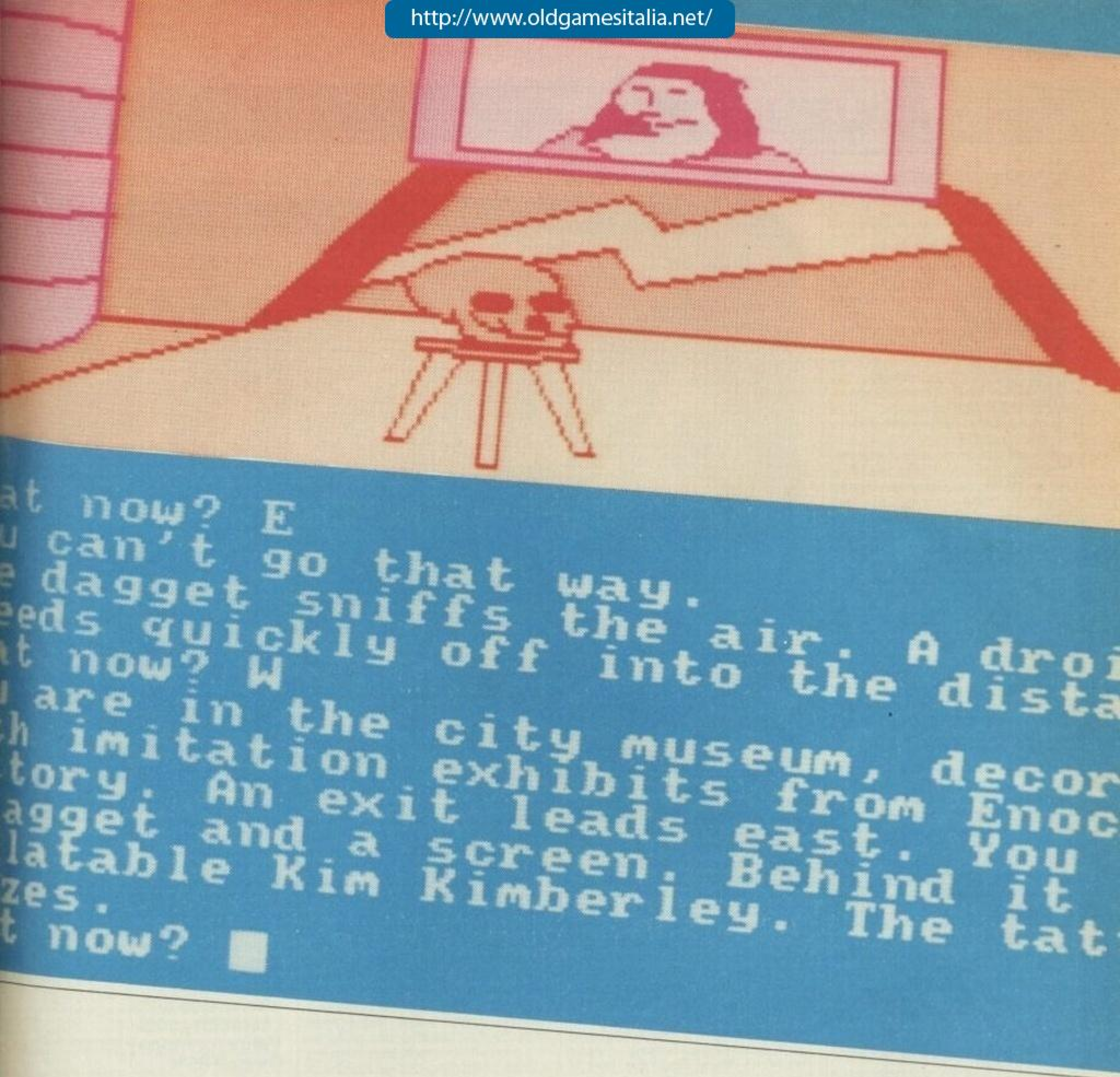
The character set employed is the standard Amstrad set and the graphics are the usual, semi-abstracted illos that proliferate in the company's more recent ventures. As usual, over 200 pictures are boasted on the cassette inlay and, as usual, many of them are strikingly similar. Still, this is used to good advantage in making the repetetive nature of scenery confusing to the player.



```
You are between the eight brick arches
of a beautiful dome. The west arch is
widest. Exits are north, northeast,
east, south, southeast, southwest, west
and northwest.
What now? S
You are in a desolate alcove decorated
as a battlefield. An exit leads north.
You can see a visor.
What now? TAKE VISOR
Taken.
What now? █
```

As for the plot, work it out for yourself. I have managed to get some way into the game, but everything that surrounds me is so typically cryptic, it will be some time before I am certain of what's going on. I'll probably be wrong right up until the end, as well. It wouldn't be the first time, with a Level 9 game.

The game is very good in terms of interaction and the company have obviously not lost their smug sense of humour but this is one of their more thoughtful games and, despite the speed at which everything goes on around you, the game is rather slowly paced. It's a good game in its own right, though after playing it, you may wish that the first two had been bought previously. Getting anywhere in the game is difficult but then, isn't that the story with all



```
at now? E
u can't go that way.
e dagget sniffs the air. A droi
eeds quickly off into the dista
t now? W
 are in the city museum, decor
h imitation exhibits from Enoc
tory. An exit leads east. You
agget and a screen. Behind it
latable Kim Kimberley. The tat
zes.
t now? █
```

beaurocracies?

Nevertheless the lack of speed doesn't imply a lack of interest. At one point, I was arrested for being out after curfew, and was fined more than I had. I was taken to the police station but kicked out the next morning. No sooner was I back on the streets than a robot was fining me for being in debt! this meant I was taken to hospital and asked whether I wanted to sell any of my spare parts. Not knowing whether I had any, but realising this was a chance to get out of a catch 22 situation, I agreed to sell. The next thing I knew, I had a couple of hundred creds. But I cannot find out what's been assumed to be spare and sold off. I can almost here the Level 9 bunch in hysterics from here. Nice one, folks.

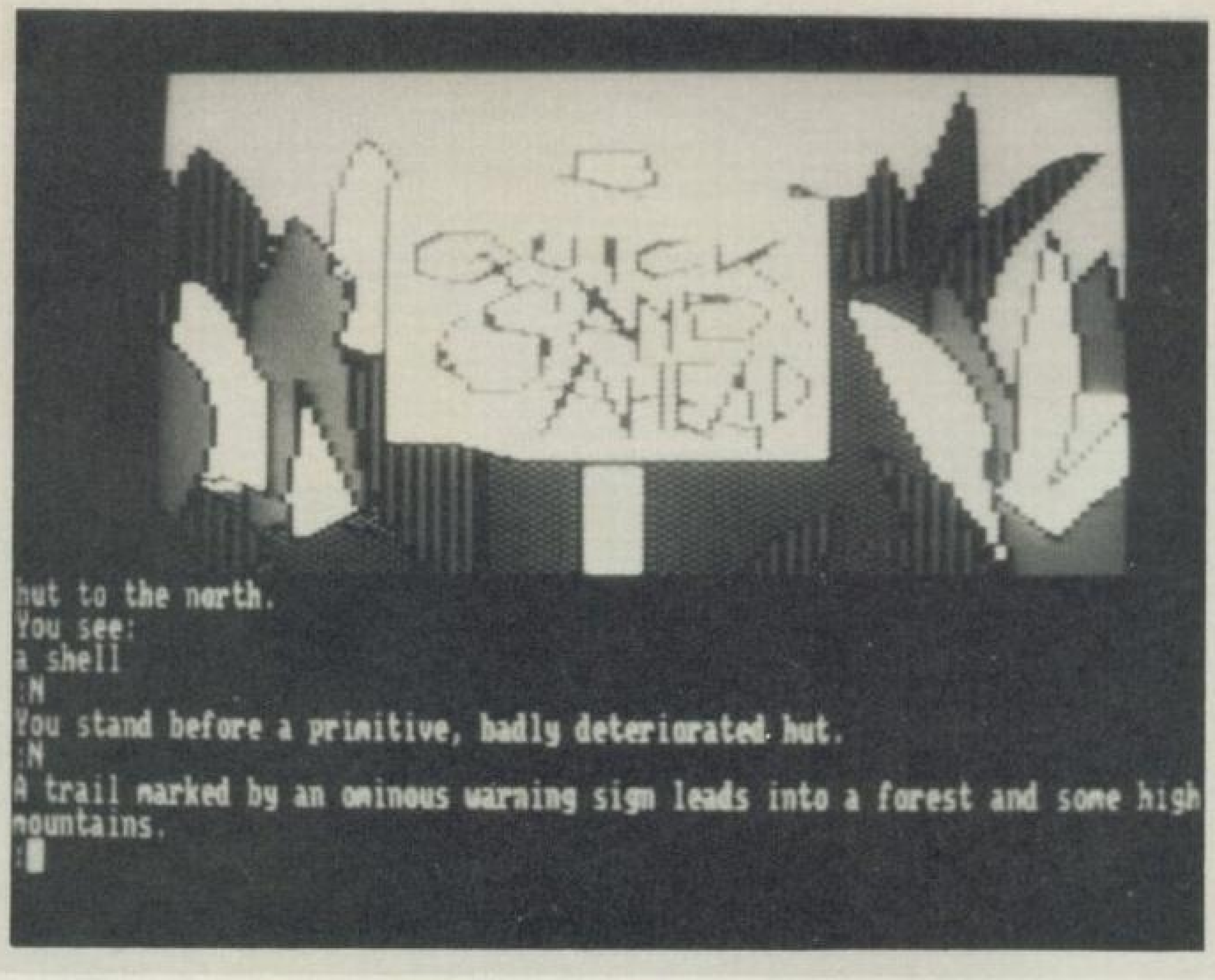
I thought the new parser was annoyingly flawed in some respects. Some originality was actually lost by things like 'Door: that's just scenery'. And often, when I requested something the computer did not understand, it would tell me use of a word was incorrect but for some reason, add an 's' to the word every time. But when all is said and done, the criticisms have to be put in perspective, and what flaws there are become irrelevant when taken as a proportion of the game. It's derivative in parts but fascinatingly original and clever in others. It would make a good Christmas present. Need I say more . . .

Atmosphere 88%
Plot 91%
Interaction 93%
Lastability 94%
Value for money 90%
Overall 91%

An Amtix! Accolade

MINDSHADOW

Activision, £9.99 cass



```
hut to the north.
You see:
a shell
:N
You stand before a primitive, badly deteriorated hut.
:N
A trail marked by an ominous warning sign leads into a forest and some high
mountains.
:█
```

Activision's first pure adventure foray on the Amstrad is a translation of the critically acclaimed Commodore game that involves amnesia, a legendary bird and, well . . .

When the game is first loaded, the player is presented with a series of introductory screens to explain all the nuances of computer adventuring to the uninitiated. A small sample adventure is subsequently displayed along with guiding text. Very nice. The explanations are coherent and relevant and would prove useful to those unfamiliar with the nature of such games. For those who need no such introduction, the screens may be bypassed and the adventure proper loaded.

The game begins with you stuck on a desert island without any memory of who you are, how you got there and what 's necessary to complete the game. Consequently, exploration and patience are essential if the game is to progress. The island has its own dangers, including quicksand and craggy cliffs. Clues to progress in the game are indeed plentiful, but the game is extremely difficult and all but the most patient beginners are likely to become frustrated at some point. When help is asked for, a Condor flies overhead (though why, I have no idea!) and offers some clues. He's a fussy devil who will only make three visits, so use his services wisely. He isn't too keen to help in the early stages either. It's up to you.

The game uses a parser capable of taking limited multi-command input and some of the responses you can get are really quite amusing. It isn't without its faults however. It allows you to examine objects which do not exist rather than telling you they don't. Otherwise it was trouble free, however and very fast.

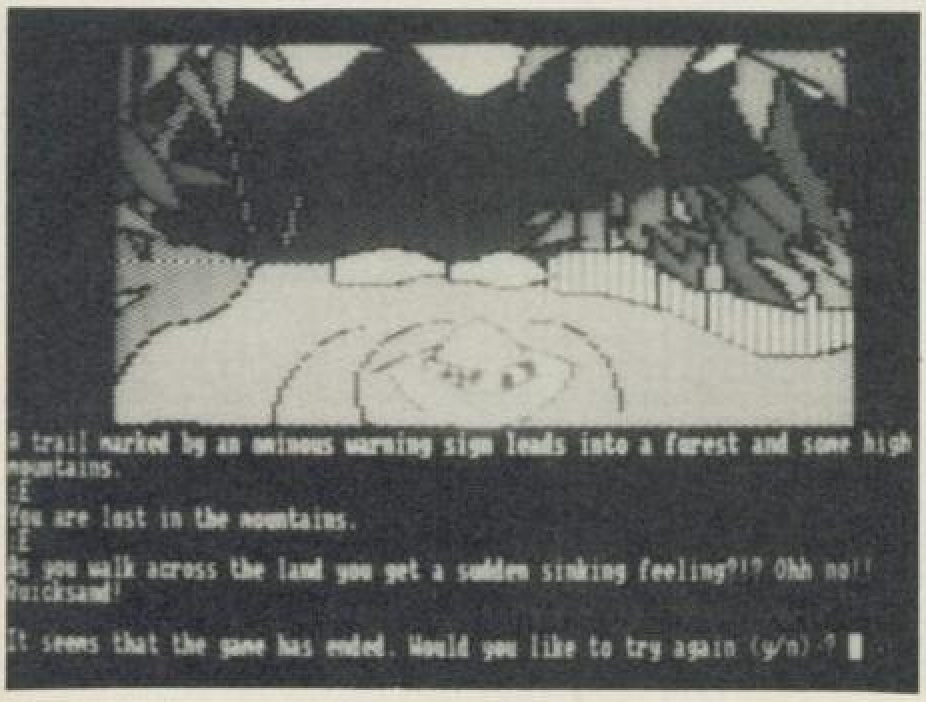
The display is in mode 2 in the top two thirds of the screen and mode zero at the bottom. This means that the graphics are extremely colourful and attractive (they are also very well drawn) and eighty column text display is used. The overall impression given by this combination is very professional and neat but those using colour monitors may find the text a little hard to read after a while.

Finally, the game is in two sections. It has considerable scope for a cassette based adventure and one which will take many hours to complete. To aid you in the arduous but inevitable multi-saves required to finish, there is a Quicksave and Quickload facility which does a lot to take the monotony out of such tasks.

I found the game absorbing and enjoyable, though I suspect I am far from finishing. As it's a game about your mind I found the opportunity to 'think about . . . ' something very interesting indeed. Essentially, the player already carries the answers to the plot with him. It seems to be a case of finding things that help jog that faulty memory into action. It's a clever game that never really had the success it deserved on its other conversions. Whether this pattern will change for the Amstrad conversion, is impossible to tell.

It isn't a classic. The faults with the parser can lead to too many mistakes. The guidelines suggest always looking closely at the illustrations to find details you may otherwise miss. However, if the illustration is ambiguous, there is no way of determining what an object is from guesswork because, as I mentioned earlier, the game allows the examination of non-existent objects. Apart from moving quickly from one location to another, there seemed to be no constructive use of the multi-command feature either (though perhaps this comes further into the adventure).

In conclusion, it's a reasonably priced adventure with excellent graphics and a good original plot. But its flaws detract from it a little. I suspect that beginners may find the game too frustrating and therefore, the introductory piece, whilst an essentially good idea, might be somewhat redundant with regards to this game.



```
A trail marked by an ominous warning sign leads into a forest and some high
mountains.
:E
You are lost in the mountains.
:E
As you walk across the land you get a sudden sinking feeling?!? Ohh no!!
Quicksand!

It seems that the game has ended. Would you like to try again (y/n) ? █
```

Atmosphere 81%
Plot 89%
Interaction 80%
Lastability 90%
Value for money 83%
Overall 85%

JEUX SANS FRONTIERS?

This is the part of the column where I finally get to do what I've been trying to do ever since issue one but haven't had time (if you can follow that then you can do anything). What's that? Well, have you ever heard of 8TH Day.

8TH Day are a company producing Quilled adventures for the Amstrad micros. One of the first things you notice about their Games Without Frontiers (who's the Peter Gabriel fan?) range, is the price; £2.50 for cassettes or £7.49 for diskettes. They all come packaged in a standard size cassette box with a simple black cover. Most unintimidating! The first of the range to appear on the Amstrad are *Ice Station Zero*, *Quann Tulla* and *Faerie* and are fully compatible with the entire range of Amstrad micros.

The first of the three is *Ice Station Zero*. Intended as a beginner's game, it involves a madman's plot to annihilate New York unless someone (he appears not to be fussy about whom) pays him one billion dollars. This madman is not just any raving (I'm a teapot) looney but an international terrorist known simply as Stirling. Apparently, as a remote Polar research establishment has fallen into this megalomaniac's hands, he means business.

You play the part of an agent sent to cross the barren tundra leading to the ice cap and stop Sterling. Of course this involves actually finding and defeating him. So there are other factors to consider, apart from dealing with the typical super-baddie. Defeating the elements and wild creatures such as wolves and even a Yeti!

Being a quilled game, the player is limited to two word input, but the authors have gone to considerable lengths to ensure that as much vocabulary as possible has been added and messages are as helpful as necessary. Presentation is good. Although the games have not been illustrated with the second part of the Gilsoft package, a fairly striking loading screen graces the opening of the game. Key words are highlighted and, as you may expect, input and responses are shown in different colours to add clarity.

The puzzles are deliberately aimed at the novice adventurer and within their limitations, work quite well. The player is unlikely to spend any time finding contrived and unlikely combinations of the verb — noun formula just to make his ideas work. If he does, he's probably barking up the wrong tree anyway.

The game is not all that unlike the plot for a James Bond film. If you enjoy such and are a beginner to adventuring, then you should find the game most enjoyable. The more experienced players may find the game's limitations too restrictive, but if they decide to opt for a light game (for those times when the old favourites are just too mind-boggling) then this is worth picking up.

The second game is more of a typical science fiction adventure called *Quann Tulla*. Set in the far future, you find yourself allied to an ailing federation struggling against a corrupt interstellar empire. Now don't throw up (I'll remind you that you're reading the best adventure column around — well, I think so). After this rather hackneyed intro, the plot goes up hill considerably. The shattered hull of a starship, deep space itself and the surface of a distant, alien world, all go to make the setting for the climactic battle between the good guys and the bad guys.

This game also loads with a colourful title screen, the 8TH Day emblem proudly displayed in the corner and is presented in a similar format to the previous effort. The game itself, is more sophisticated, however. There are more puzzles to solve, many of them typical of the kind of difficulties your average SF hero gets into. A knowledge of science fiction is not needed to play the game, but one would certainly be an advantage.

Apart from the various technical problems facing the ship, there are intrigues to be sorted out and a bit of Bond style derring-do — inspired by the first game? To be honest, I suspect the game was at least influenced by Infocom's *Starcross*. The way various repairs had to be carried out, and the nature of the faults themselves did prompt the occasional feeling of 'deja-vu'.

Nevertheless, it plays fairly well. The game is not devoid of humour and is reasonably paced. Although this game has more to offer than *Ice Station Zero* in terms of puzzles and difficulty, I found it less enjoyable, over all. It was in no way lacking as far as atmosphere goes, but the slightly unoriginal nature of the plot left me slightly disappointed. For those unfamiliar with science fiction adventures, it can still be recommended however. It's been written with care and attention to detail and that is worthy of praise, if nothing else.

The last of the 8TH Day titles is also by far the most complex. *Faerie* is a surrealistic fantasy that relies heavily on the player's ability for lateral thinking (okay, all adventure games make some such demands on a player, but wait until you see some of the puzzles in this one). It's doubtful whether a game of chess like the one in this game will ever be seen anywhere else.

It's rather hard to explain the plot as you are left to discover it yourself and — well, I'm not to sure there is one outside the series of wonderfully interwoven logic puzzles. It's just one of those games you either love or hate and I loved it. When there's time, I'll go back to this one. 8TH Day sent hint sheets, but I'm reluctant to use them because they will spoil the atmosphere. All that can be said for certain, is that the player is mainly involved in the search for various treasures spread across one of the weirdest fantasy worlds I've ever encountered.

The nature of the fantasy world is very subtle and as a result, mood plays a strong part in the game. There are no contrived solutions to problems, no cliched characters to encounter. Just a highly original game that takes every advantage of the utility used to create it.

Considering that all three of the games could be purchased for less than the price of the average adventure, and the fact that the games themselves are of a higher standard than many carrying a ten pound price tag, they offer excellent value for money. However, the games are unlikely to achieve much more than a 'cult following', which is a shame as they deserve to do better. The main problems facing this company would seem to be that the games are only available through mail order (as far as I know) and the lack of gimmickery (which, however unfortunately, always helps sales). Hopefully, 8TH Day will improve packaging (which is neat but otherwise forgettable) and most importantly, move away from the restrictions of *The Quill* and develop their own system. Perhaps then, the talent for good plot lines which they evidently possess will be expressed better and bring a new force to the adventure games field.

Ice Station Zero

Atmosphere 73%
Plot 74%
Interaction 67%
Lastability 63%
Value for money 74%
Overall 76%

Quann Tulla

Atmosphere 73%
Plot 71%
Interaction 68%
Lastability 69%
Value for money 74%
Overall 75%

Faerie

Atmosphere 79%
Plot 80%
Interaction 74%
Lastability 78%
Value for money 79%
Overall 83%

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As something of a change, this issue's column has been graced by MICHAEL JAMPEL (perhaps best described as a computer tactician), and his views on how to get the best from DIY micro-wargaming. So here is an overview: from playing games with wooden blocks and rubber bands to . . .

SILICON SIMULATIONS

CONFINING CONFLICTS

A **wargame** is an attempt to simulate wars and battles of the past, present and future. Common periods for wargames are the Ancient World (Romans etc), the Napoleonic era and the Second World War. It is possible to simulate modern events such as the Arab-Israeli wars and even to imagine future conflicts between different extrapolated technologies and worlds. The first wargame (as we understand the meaning of the word today) was probably *Kriegspiel* which was used to train Austrian officers in the 19th century. This used small blocks of wood to represent the various units, such as infantry, cavalry and artillery.

British wargaming took off when HG Wells published a book called *Little Wars* in which he used toy guns to fire pencils at inch high lead figures. Nowadays, some people use bits of cardboard with the name and abilities of the unit written on them, while others prefer spending hours painting models and scenery. Games can even be played with dominoes for tanks and marbles for ammunition. However, as this is unlikely to paint a true picture of real battles, proper sets of rules have been written. Having decided the scale of the conflict (whether between two towns or two continents), laws comparing two tanks, for example, could be written. Tank A is superior to tank B so it can hit a target further away. There is always an element of luck in the real world, so the relationship is modified; tank A hits the target if player A throws four or more (on normal dice) whereas tank B hits on three or more. So now it's clear that although tank A is capable of greater range, it is less likely to do damage. Of course, this example fails to take many of the complexities of firing a tank's weaponry, but from such considerations do sets of rules evolve.

Fighting in Ancient Greece involved spears, slings and swords. Although weaponry has since progressed (and so have tactics), certain things remain constant. Supplies must still reach forces hundreds of miles away; only the means to transport them have altered as mechanised transport has replaced the horse. This increased sophistication has been matched in wargaming; special rules now determine whether or not a soldier obeys his orders as well as comparing hundreds of different weapons and thicknesses of armour. A professionally written set of rules may be a hundred pages long and cost as much as £10.

Often wargamers cannot find someone who shares their interests locally and so solo wargaming has developed. Books are available, which decide a certain set of events given a particular set of circumstances, and so the opposition can be said to be programmed.

STRATEGY

PROCESSING THE PRIORITIES

Many people saw the film *Wargames* but in fact current military computers are simply information processors, requiring human input whenever a decision must be made. Any home computer wargame program is the same with the exception that the human input is usually at the writing stage, and not so much during play (apart from simple data). It takes the human mind to decide when a house is no longer worth defending, a decision based on experience. To make up some simple law is easy (for example: for every enemy tank within 100m add 5 points; for every soldier add one point — if the total is greater than fifty, then retreat), but the result is unlikely to be realistic. This is because the true wargame is as much about **command structures** and long term strategy as blasting away at the enemy.

In *Kriegspiel*, each player sat in a different room, able to see only his own soldiers on the map. The umpire would delay implementing the player's orders and give misleading intelligence reports to see how the officer would react. Therefore the limitations of the computer for simulating a human player must be accepted, and thought subsequently given to what the computer can do.

Instead of having rules on paper, they could be on disk, of course. Relevant criteria pertaining to a given action could be input and the computer 'rolls the dice'. It could find the results far faster than a human could, looking through the manuals (especially with the more complex requirements of modern warfare simulation).

To create opposing armies of equal strength, points are allocated to each gun and tank, etc. The computer could randomly generate armies of a particular value so that games would be constantly varied. However, the number of historically acceptable variations is small.

It is possible to use simple rules like those mentioned above to simulate the enemy but frankly, throwing a dice is just as effective. Furthermore, the programmer (the one most likely to fight the computer) would know the intricate nature of the rules he had created and consequently some of the element of surprise would be lost. Professionally written programs would not be as initially well known to the gamer but he would probably want to examine the listing, just out of interest.

DEALING WITH DETAILS

A complex program could, in fact, take a lot of the drudgery out of the game. A confident soldier is more likely to obey orders than one who is hungry, cold and has seen his friends being killed. Therefore, better sets of rules have checks on morale which must be performed each time a unit is ordered to attack. The result of the test depends on the proximity of the enemy, the number of casualties sustained and so on.

If the location of every unit was known to the computer, these checks could be automated, making the game flow more quickly, except that the location of the unit and other information about it (such as the number of survivors) would have to be constantly re-entered. If the programmer's human opponent argues about a decision or rule interpretation, it is hard to show him the insides of the program, especially if he knows little about computers. BASIC which is easily understood, is far too slow for serious use. Thus even the options above require some form of back up from the conventional paper rules.

WAR WITHOUT TEARS

So far the role of the micro has been considered purely in terms of aiding the use of traditional models but it is possible to abandon these in favour of a completely computer based game. US Gold's *Beach-Head* is not a wargame but a multi-part arcade game with war as its theme, instead of 'zapping the aliens'. Something like *Theatre Europe* is more like the kind of simulation we are discussing.

As more reviews of published games appear in this and other columns, and if the market builds up, the software houses will respond. Unfortunately, despite the lack of an obvious link between playing the games and actually killing people, politics sometimes gets involved, intimidating publishers. In fact, any realistic simulation would be more likely to encourage pacificsm than aggressive tendencies as the true horror of real war became apparent. For anybody just interested in wargames, many magazines are easily available. For those interested in the hobby's connection with computers however, you will just have to watch this space.

Michael Jampel

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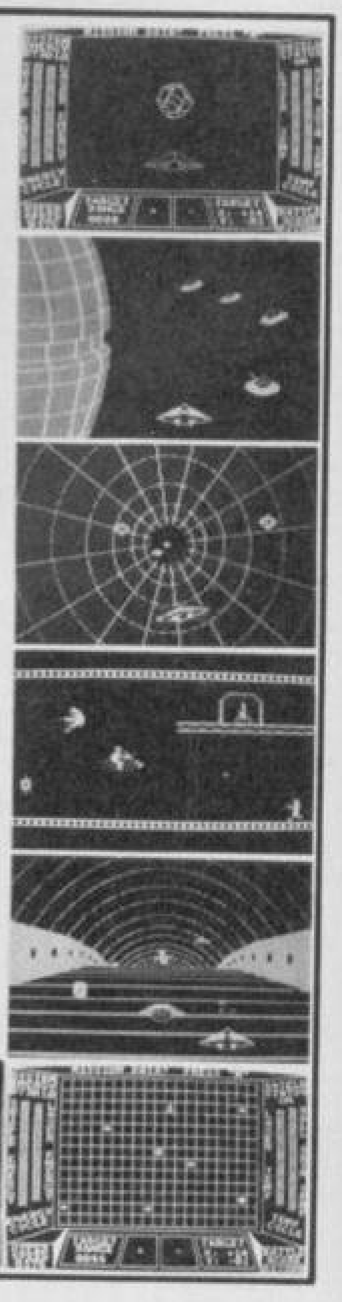

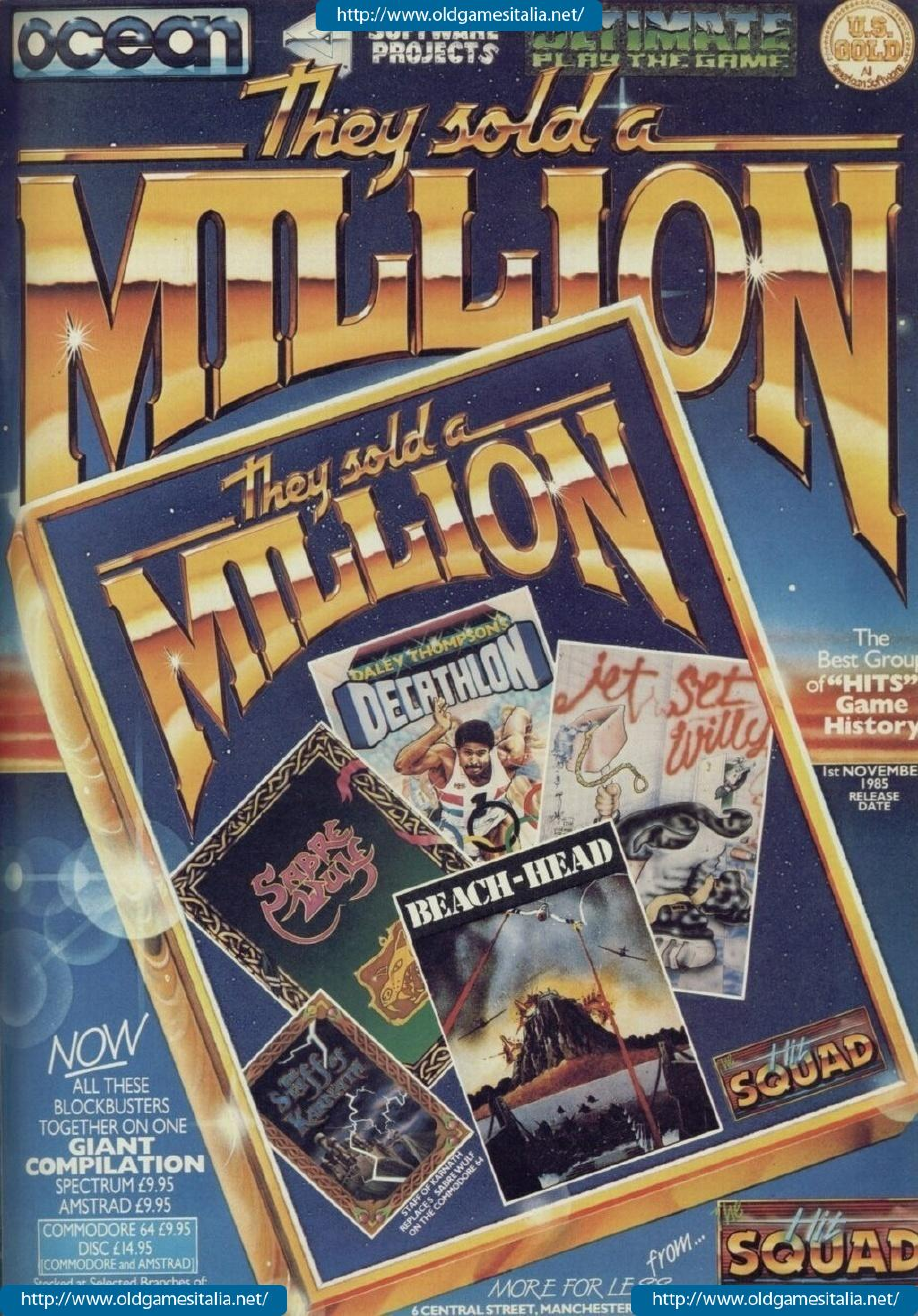
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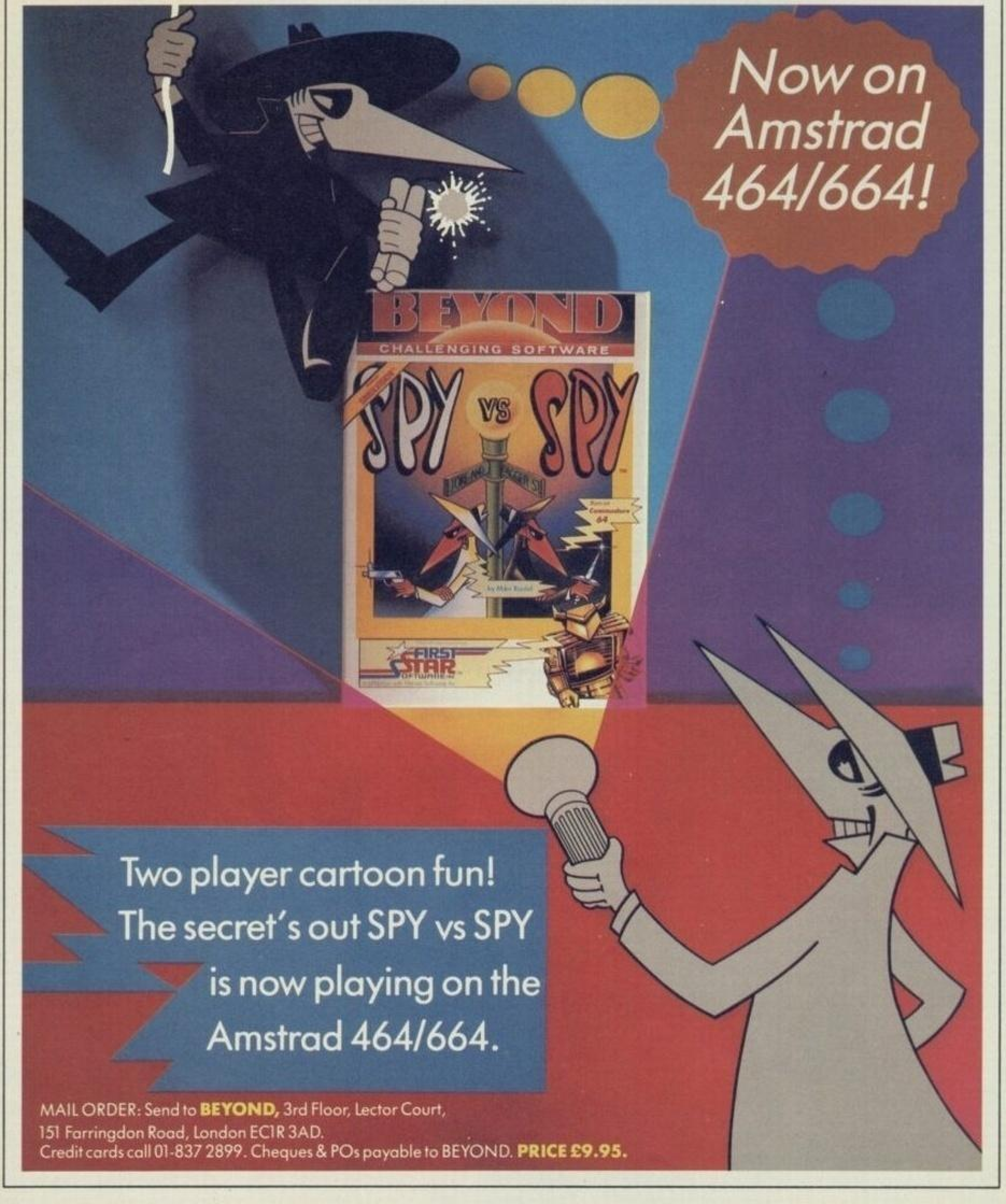
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And if you really want to round off your entry, you might wish to provide a little picture of your Zoid in action on the surface of the planet **Zoidstar**. Put together a little Zoid portfolio, in fact, as if you were the designer of the new fighting machine who had to get his idea accepted.◀

Plenty to keep you busy, thinking and designing, over the Christmas Pud eating season. Get your entries in by the end of January, cos we'll make Jeremy judge the competition on 30th of that month — with any luck we should get a colour snap of him going green with envy.

Entries please, to I WANT TO MAKE JEREMY JEALOUS, AMTIX! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB

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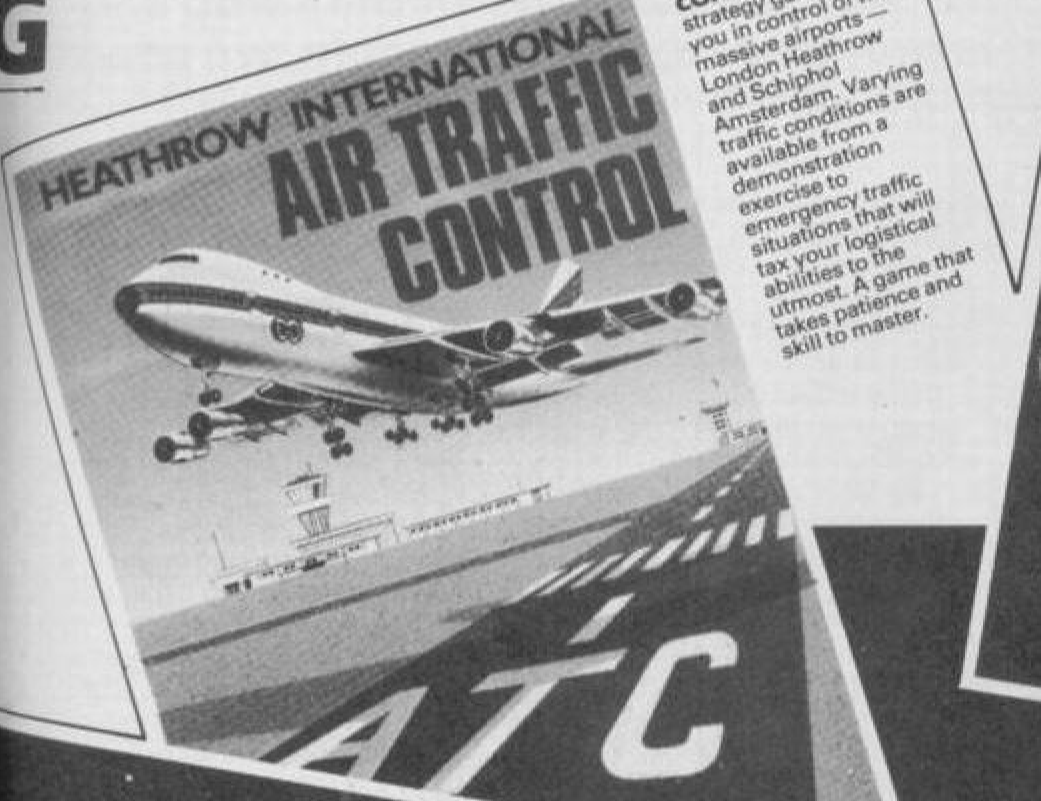

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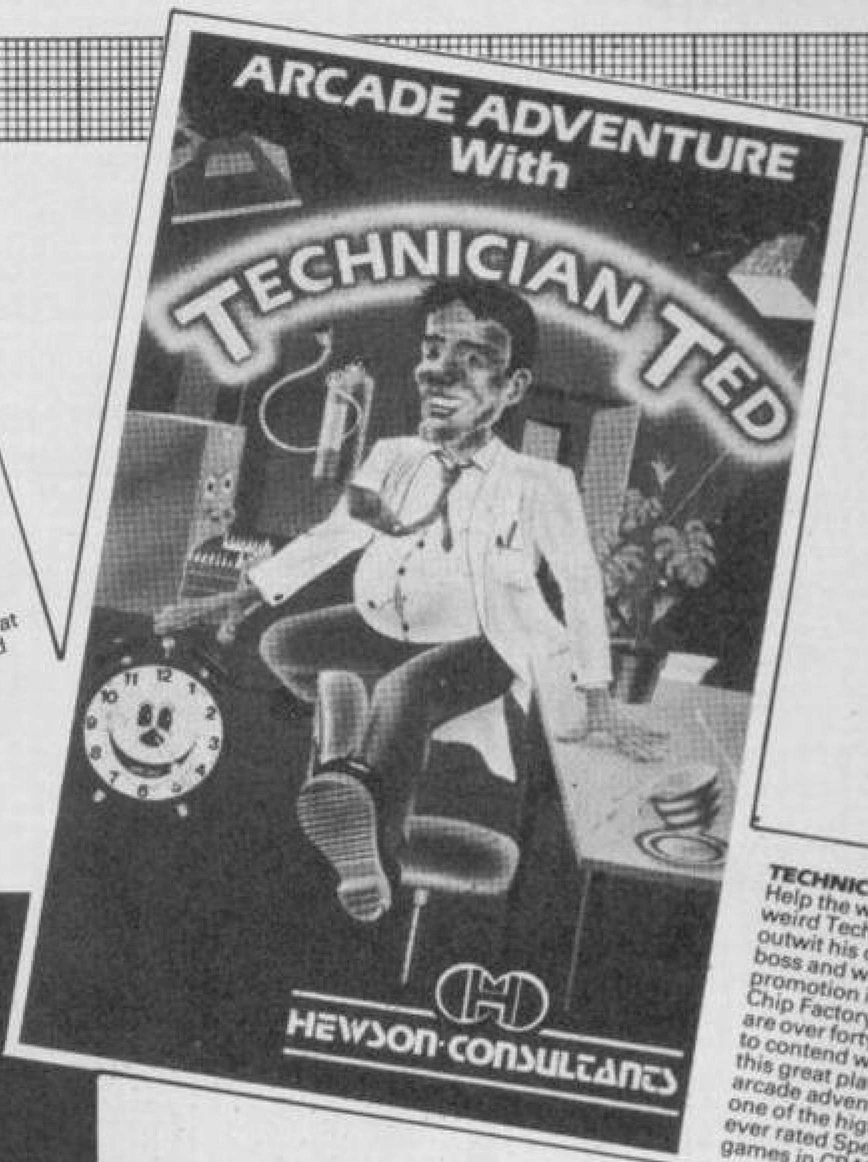

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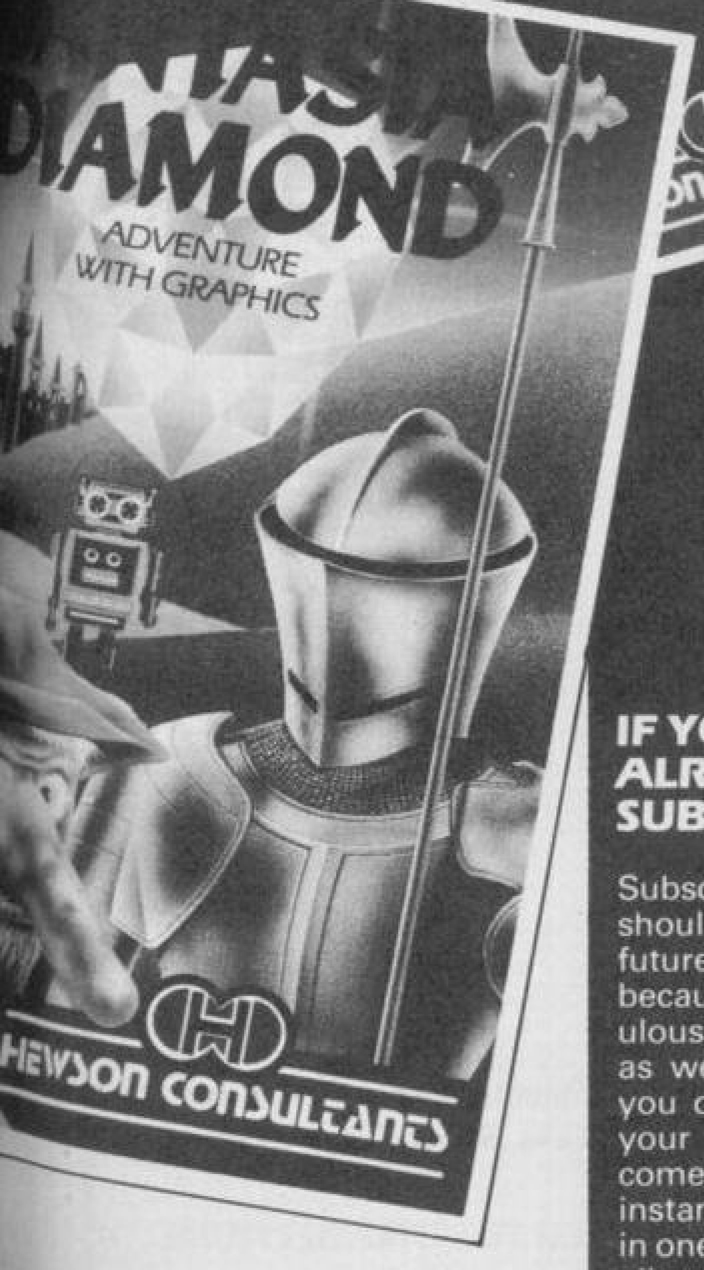

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SHROPSHIRE SY8 1AQ

MORE WHEEEEE, SPLAT (GENTLY)

And yet another update on how the AMTIX!/CRASH/ZZAP! Dr Barnardo and Action Group charity parachute jump is progressing. C'mon people, we need your votes to push some of our staff out of a high-flying plane — they want to go — they really do . . .

I suppose that it was inevitable that those who didn't really want to jump should attract the most votes. ZZAP's very own Mr Rignall seems to be at the top of the list and he is very concerned. When he asked me how he should go about getting out of this mess I suggested that he should try being pleasant to people which would result in his being ignored. Of course the easier alternative would be to send a few votes in himself, to try and work his way down the list. He put the proposition to his bank manager who simply refused to advance Julian the necessary funds. Strange thing was, the very next day we had some votes from a bank manager, for Julian!

Franco Frey, The Newsfield technocrat, is more than a bit disappointed that he is lying only eleventh in the jump table. I am a little surprised by this as Franco writes quite a lot for all three magazines, mostly on graphics packages, so he really deserves to considered. Someone at the last ZX Microfair really put his finger on Franco's problem, when he declared that Franco 'was a really nice guy'. The voting trend seems to be for the Newsfield equivalent of a video nasty, hence the strong showing by the likes of Gary Penn, Julian Rignall and Robin Candy. Send a nice guy aloft — Vote for Franco.

While we are on the subject of video nasties that reminds me of Mr Candy, who in truth is a good bloke, he's just misunderstood. There seems to be something of an ego battle being conducted between Messrs Candy and Mangram. Each of them see the number of votes as a measure of popularity. This has naturally put Lloyd in a very difficult position, he isn't keen to allow his frail body to be ejected from the back of a Hercules. He is, however, just as determined not to be shown up by 'that little jumped up poke person'. The CRASH Editor Graeme Kidd seems to be attracting more votes than he bargained for, so many in fact that the worried man was caught actually trying to edit the jump table. I have now taken steps to ensure that the table is kept where Graeme can't find it, on his desk.

The software industry continues to donate prizes. Among the latest contributors are **Ocean**, **The Hit Squad**, **Incentive** and **Micromega**. The boys from Micromega, Neil Hooper to be exact, sent us a superb letter and what must be World's most awful joke, so appalling in fact we feel that it would be irresponsible to print it. We can, however, make it available to anyone daft enough to want to see it — for a mere five votes a read. And yes Neil, we would like to hear the one about His'n'Hercules. The **Ram Jam Corporation** have promised to send us a bumper box of prizes and a respectable block of votes. A sudden burst of generosity perhaps? Well not entirely, it seems AMTIX!'s Sean Masterson has upset them. Ram Jam, far from being a bunch of wallies, quickly calculated that sending a substantial number of votes for Sean would be a lot cheaper than paying the train fare for their heavy mob to come all the way up from London. Smart.

Even John Edwards, the client liaison person, has collected a vote! As yet I have been unable to track down the source but suspect that it may have come from an advertising agency, if so, send more. The Army would be truly grateful of the opportunity to test the lift capacity of a civilian-laden Hercules. I can think of no better way than by sending John, Graeme Kidd and Gary Liddon.

Remember, whoever you chose as a victim, never forget that every penny you send will go towards making a handicapped person's life easier.

This months voting recommendations:
FRANCO FREY because he's daft enough to really want to do it, and **GARY LIDDON** because he thinks he's man enough to.

Next month we shall publish, for the first time, the Jump Table so far together with the pleas and excuses of the top six.

I want .... to jump out of a very high-flying Hercules (He or she may use a parachute at their own discretion)

I enclose a donation of £ ..... (minimum of £1.00) and no coins please. We get charged for receiving them.

I am frequently known as ....

and can be reached at ....

....

Postcode ....

SEND YOUR VOTES AND LOOT (NO COINS!) to:

WEEeeeee SPLAT! PO BOX 10, LUDLOW,
SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

THE COMPETITIONY BIT

Name three flight simulation games

(1) ....

(2) ....

(3) ....

In fifteen words or less, using your skill and judgement and a pen, complete the phrase below in the most apt and original way:

I WANT JEREMY SPENCER TO JUMP BECAUSE

....

STOP PRESS! Oli offers original cover painting as a prize for the voters in the Loony Leap Charity Competition!

Brrrrrrrr . . . Tick click tickaty tick . . . Beeeeeeeeeeeeeep

Plug into Telecom and let the chips chatter

AMTIX! COMPETITION

Have a magic moment with a modem; courtesy of GEC, HONEYSOFT and MICRONET who have each donated ten prizes, each of which would be worth winning alone, but all three together. . . can you cope?

With the ten kits on offer you and Straddles can enjoy getting out and about together. Meet all sorts of wonderful computers, chat up an isolated database, form a meaningful relationship with a mainframe and get to know other Amstrads. This is your Amstrad's chance to get out and go cosmopolitan.

The **GEC Modem** is styled on their professional range. The modem operates at 1200/75, 75/1200 or at a pseudo 1200/1200. An unusual feature of the DATA-CHAT is that it draws its power from the phone socket and Telecom don't mind, because they approved it. Altogether this is a very smart and reliable package with which any Straddles would like to be seen.

To drive the modem you will need a serial interface and a reasonable chunk of software. **Honeysoft** have offered ten of their highly versatile interfaces together with the necessary software. The **Honeysoft Interface** allows dual-channel operation so you can use CP/M 2.2 to the full. It also boasts a full X on-X off implementation allowing software handshaking from BASIC. To reduce the problems caused by cable connections the interface automatically enables unused handshake lines, so it won't get angry when a pin is not connected. The software supplied with the interface supports full Prestel emulation with an enhanced character set and two screen modes. Full telesoftware capability means being able to download programs and games over the phone network. Should you want to talk to the likes of Telecom Gold then the scrolling software also allows that, together with the transfer of Xmodem and ASCII files. Incoming data can be spooled (written continuously) to printer or disk.

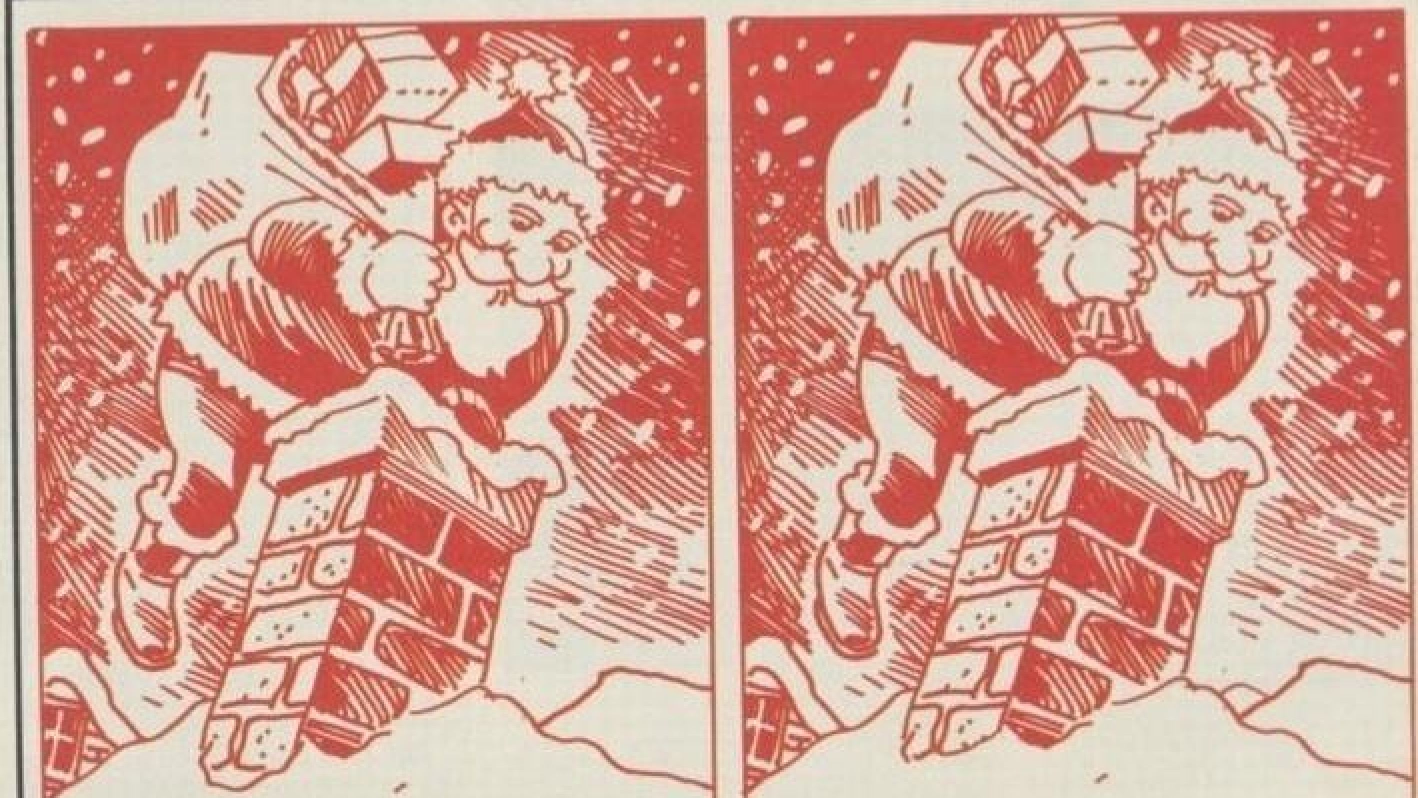
Just so you can have somebody to chat to, **Micronet** are giving away ten, one year subscriptions. **Micronet 800** puts you in touch with 60,000 other users giving you access to news, games, gossip, Agony Aunt, the famed Wednesday night chatline and, of course, the cheapest and fastest postal service in the land, Mailbox electronic mail. The subscription includes access to the 300,000 pages of information on Prestel including everything from international news to the length of a Mini Metro. Dialing up Micronet is a lot cheaper than you might think, 98% of telephone subscribers are only a local call away and the service is free in the evenings and at weekends.

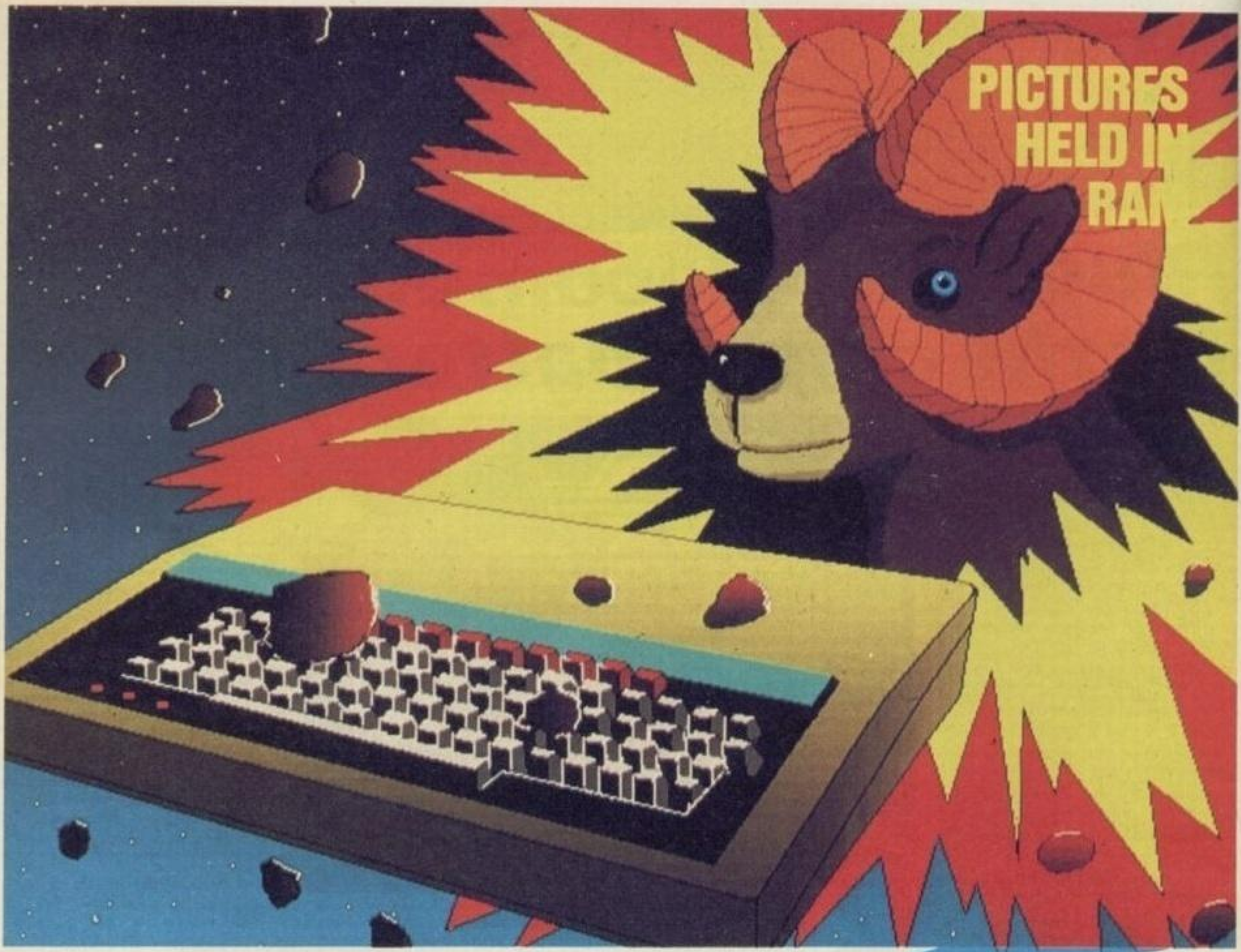
For such a superb prize you might expect to have to move Heaven and Earth to win it. Not at all, the competition is simplicity itself. If you look at the drawings below you will notice that there are some differences. Yes, this is a spot the difference, but with a difference — we aren't telling how many differences there are.

Compare the two pictures until you have gone boggle eyed and then circle the differences on the right hand picture. The last bit is easy, but vital. Write your name and address on the form below (you would be surprised!). If you prefer you can photocopy the page but please don't be tempted to send more than one entry, the competition minions are specially trained to spot the cheats.

Write on the back of the envelope the number of differences that you spotted and put our address on the front. **BEEEEPCOMP, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.** You must do all this by the 30th. January 1986 because that's when the competition closes.

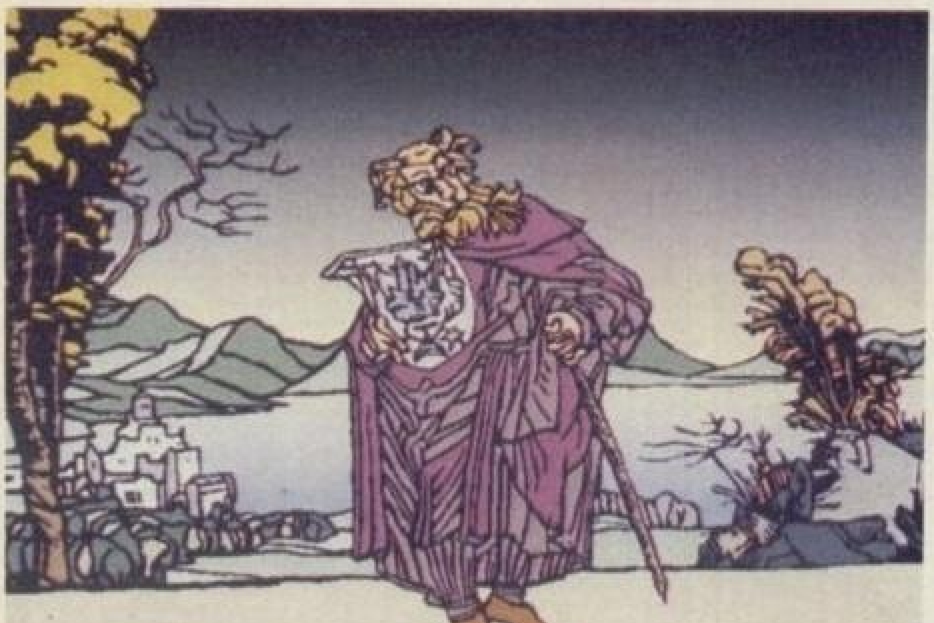
Name ....
Address ....
....
.... Postcode ....





A variation on the Extra-Ram for your BBC computer joke, courtesy of Spaceward Ltd.

IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS computer graphics techniques have improved dramatically, partly owing to advances in hardware and party owing to improvements in software design. But the most significant development in the past half-decade has been a dramatic increase in the amount of computer graphics capability your money can buy.



Black and white frame grab (put into memory from a video camera) of a linocut which was then coloured using PLUTO's Designer Software

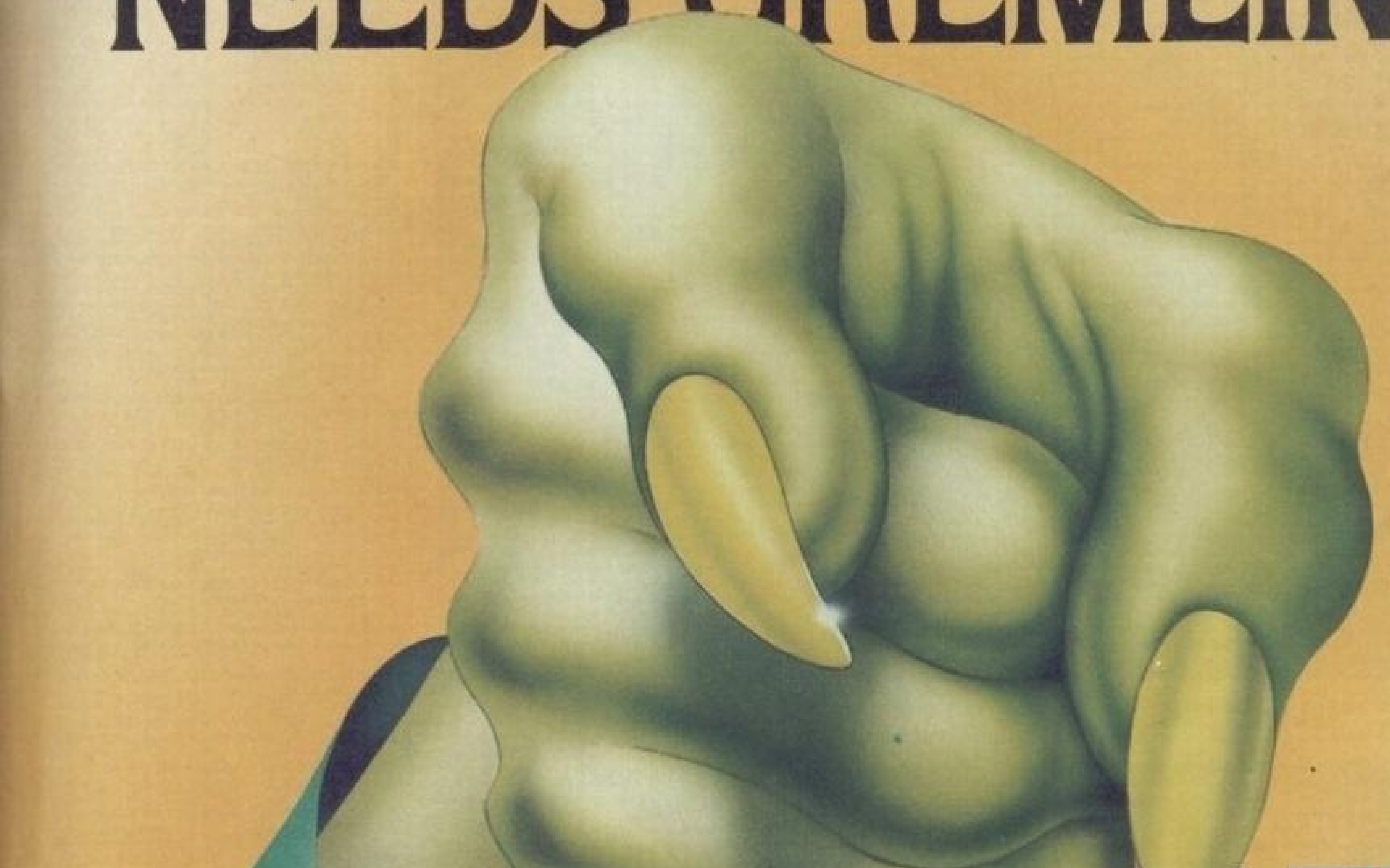
Perhaps the Spectrum at the very bottom end of the market. Nevertheless, running software such as *The Artist*, some quite spectacular effects may be created on the screen for what amounts to peanuts, pricewise. At the top of the range is a system involving Cray computers capable of creating complete, incredibly detailed animated sequences which can be used in feature films. You can be talking in terms of 8.5 **trillion** calculations to produce one second of animation at this level, though . . . all a bit much for the Z80 processor!

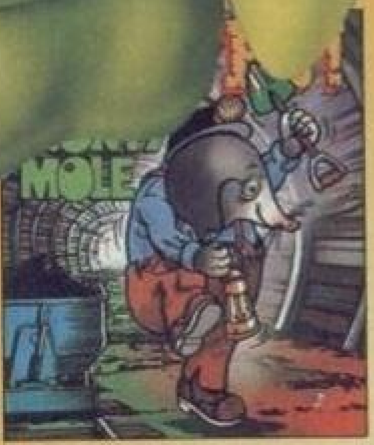
But you don't have to have a budget with lots of zeros after the pound sign to become involved in computer graphics — a few thousand pounds will set you up very nicely with a system like that made by PLUTO GRAPHICS which can be driven with a BBC computer. And for less than twenty thousand pounds it's possible to acquire systems capable of producing sophisticated images suitable for professional video applications such as that used and sold by SPACEWARD.

The applications for computer graphics are many and varied — and the range is growing daily as the price of the equipment renders the application of such techniques viable for a wider range of organisations. A great deal of progress has been made in the field of graphic design and printing — it's now possible to produce an entire page of a magazine or newspaper on a VDU screen, adding text, headlines and pictures and then sending it to a machine which prepares the plates from which the finished page will be printed. Soon entire newspapers and magazines will be produced this way.

Computer graphics are being applied in business — to produce artwork for presentations, brochures and catalogues. Using image recorders, 35mm transpar-

YOUR AMSTRAD NEEDS GREMLIN !!

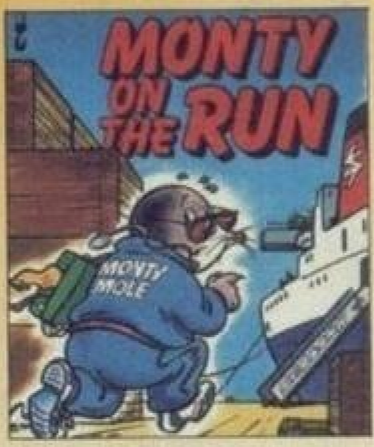




TAPE & DISK

WANTED MONTY MOLE

Monty makes a daring,coal snatching raid to his local pit. Filling his bucket as he dodges the trundling coal crushers and roaming coal drills . With his bucket filled, Monty makes his escape, only to surface and find his way is blocked . Seizing his only chance Monty collects the secret ballot papers and vote casting scroll. But when it comes to the heavy stuff a personal bodyguard of super fit pickets and deadly flying hairsprays, put up an almighty struggle with our valiant Mole.



TAPE & DISK

MONTY ON THE RUN

Super fit and desperate for freedom, our frightened hero finds refuge with the criminal underworld who offer him his chance to breathe fresh air and bask in the sunlight once again. Monty must select the correct five elements of his freedom kit from the many he's offered and not miss out on the hidden gold coins that will make him a mole of leisure.

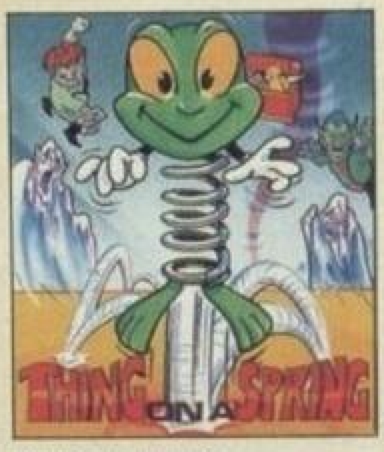
ABU SIMBEL
PROFANATION

TAPE

ABU SIMBEL PROFANATION

Over 3000 years ago, Ramses II built the Temple of Abu Simbel. For over 30 centuries, all its secrets have remained hidden to human eyes .

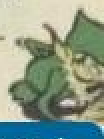
Johnny Jones, hero and explorer extraordinaire, has entered Abu Simbel and fallen victim to the Pharoah's spell. In order to continue his adventures he must free himself from the spell, reach the mortuary chamber and discover its secrets!



TAPE

THING ON A SPRING

The evil goblin is wreaking havoc on an unsuspecting world, casting spells and banishing its treasures to his underground factory deep in the bowels of the earth. How can he be stopped? What can we do? Who can do it? There's only one saviour – our hero – Thing on a Spring!
Complete the magical jigsaw and break his fiendish spell.

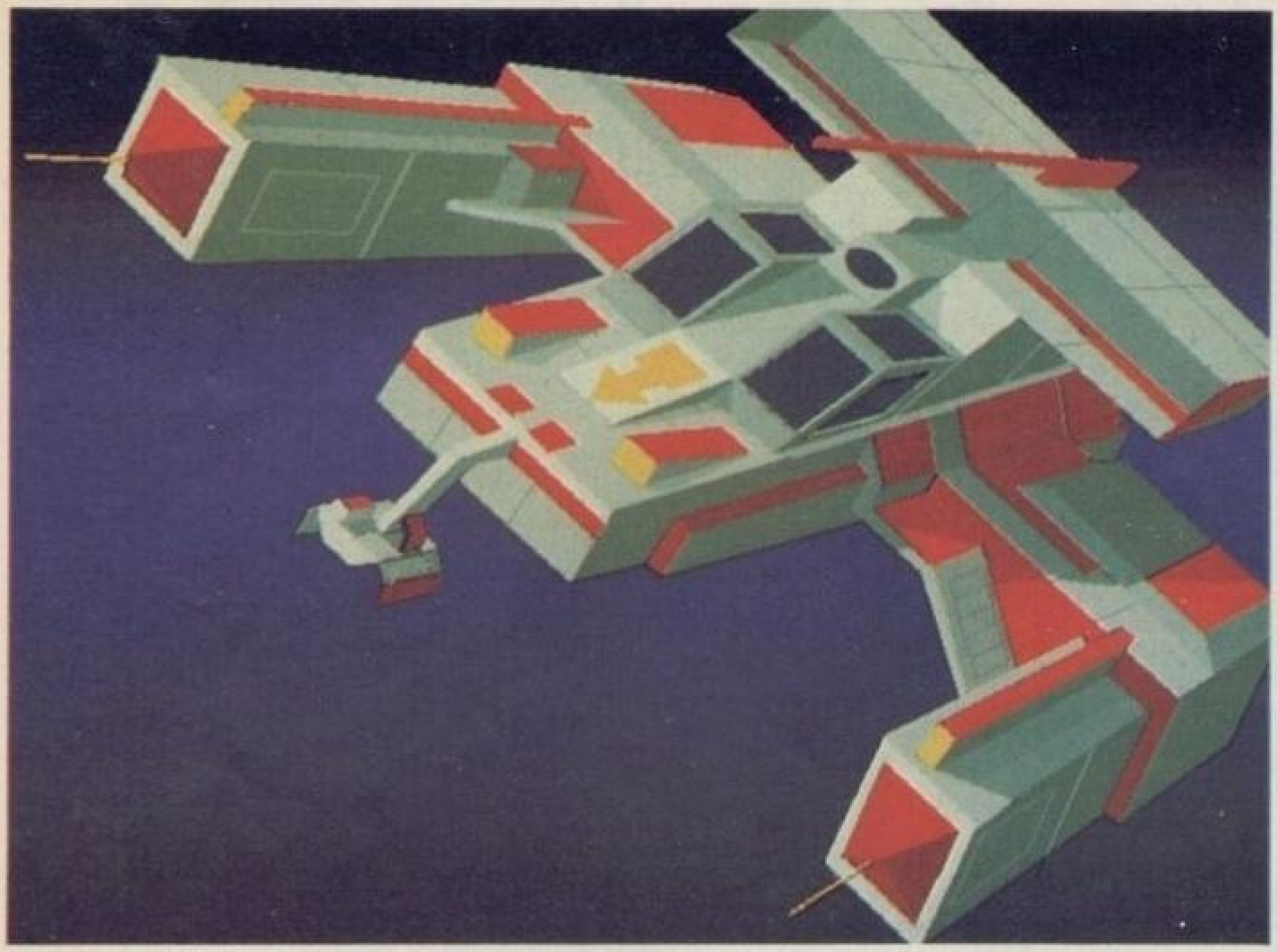


TAPE 8.95

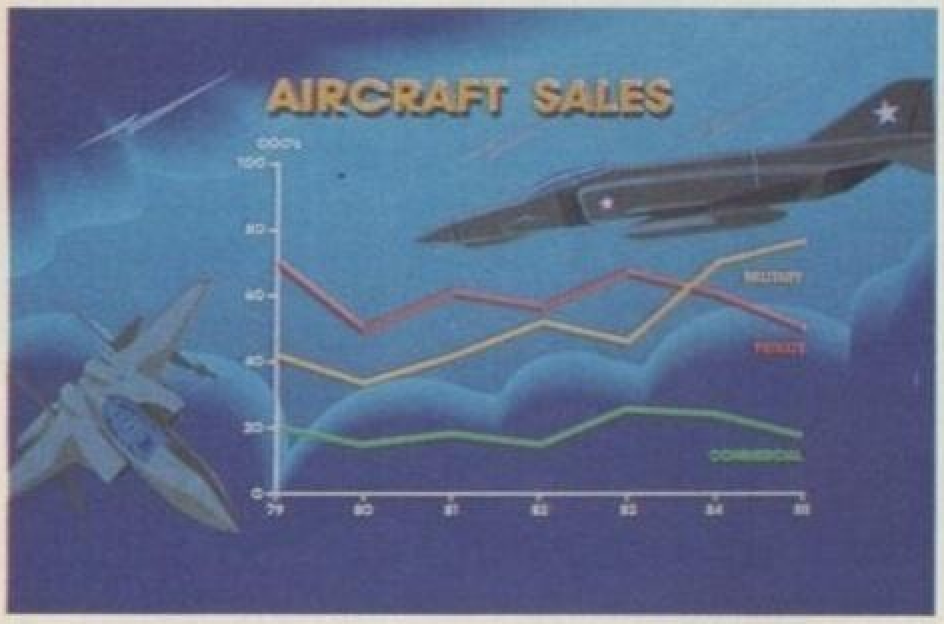
DISK 12.95

Limited 1985. Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffi

PICTURES HELD IN RAM



Hand drawn picture input to the PLUTO system using the digitising tablet



A business-type graphic produced by the IMAGE BUREAU, a firm which specialises in such things. The aircraft are taken from a library of images held in their computer's memory

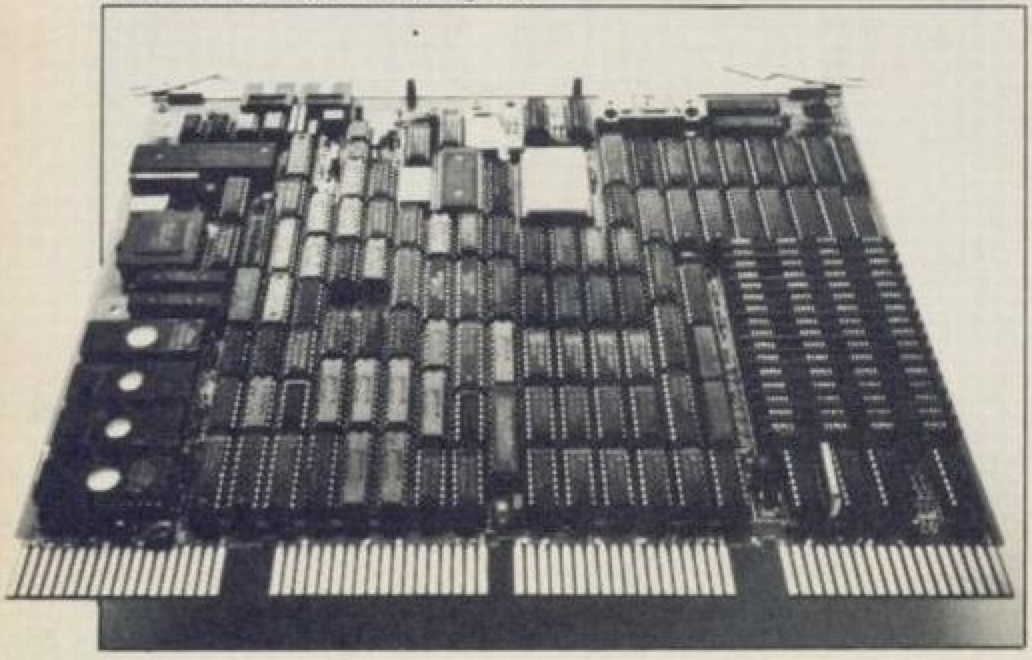
encies can be made from a computer generated image at such a high resolution (8,000 lines) that the finished result is as impressive as real artwork.

In the hands of an artist or illustrator, a computer graphics system can really come to life, allowing the artist to work with the medium in a way that is precluded by traditional techniques. Foreground, middleground and background elements of a picture can be held in memory and altered separately. A building drawn on and held in background memory, for instance can be enlarged, reduced and moved around using the most sophisticated systems, without affecting the rest of the picture.

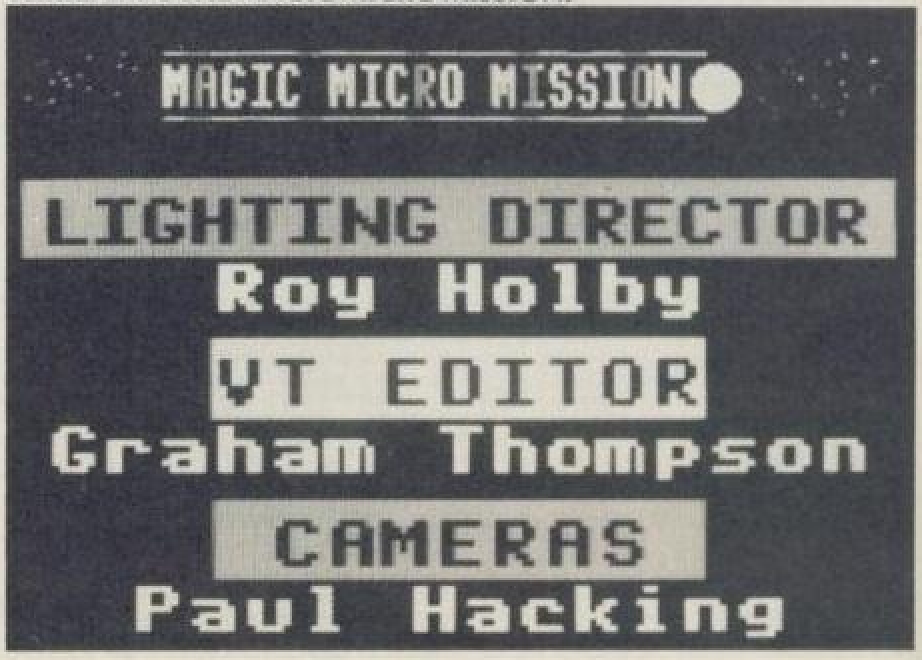
In industry, Computer Aided Design and Drafting techniques now assist in modelling stress in structures; and using kinematics, it's possible to simulate movement in an assembly held in the computer's memory as a representation of the solid object or device. A great deal of time and expense in development and testing of prototypes can be saved using such techniques. Drafting systems can produce blueprints and technical drawings about five times as fast as a human draftsman - and updates can be entered and the whole drawing re-output up to 25 times faster than it can be done manually. It is in the fields of video, film and television that computer graphics have had their most obvious impact, however. Not only are the budgets available for producing advertisements, films and television programs generally large enough to warrant the use of expensive equipment, but the end results are seen by a massive audience. Systems such as the QUANTEL PAINTBOX, which literally allow an artist to manipulate, draw and paint video images have been responsible for some very sophisticated video graphics. And techniques have now advanced to the stage where it is viable to shoot a film on video, edit it and then put the finished opus onto film for distribution on the traditional cinema circuit.

The story turns full circle however . . . another Z80 computer, the humble Spectrum, has already been used to provide graphics for broadcast TV programmes. Designer Dave Beeson used his Spectrum to produce a graphic sequence for a programme on hacking for Central ITV this year — and a couple of years ago, the end credits for Central's MAGIC MICRO MISSION were written on a 16K Spectrum by Simon Goodwin, the technical wiz for our sister magazine, CRASH.

An example of the kind of chippery pokery involved in a specialised graphics system nowadays. There's probably enough to build half a dozen Amstrads and still leave change . . .



Amazing what can be achieved even with a computer as small as a 16K Spectrum using BASIC. This little sequence formed the end credits for Central ITV's THE MAGIC MICRO MISSION.

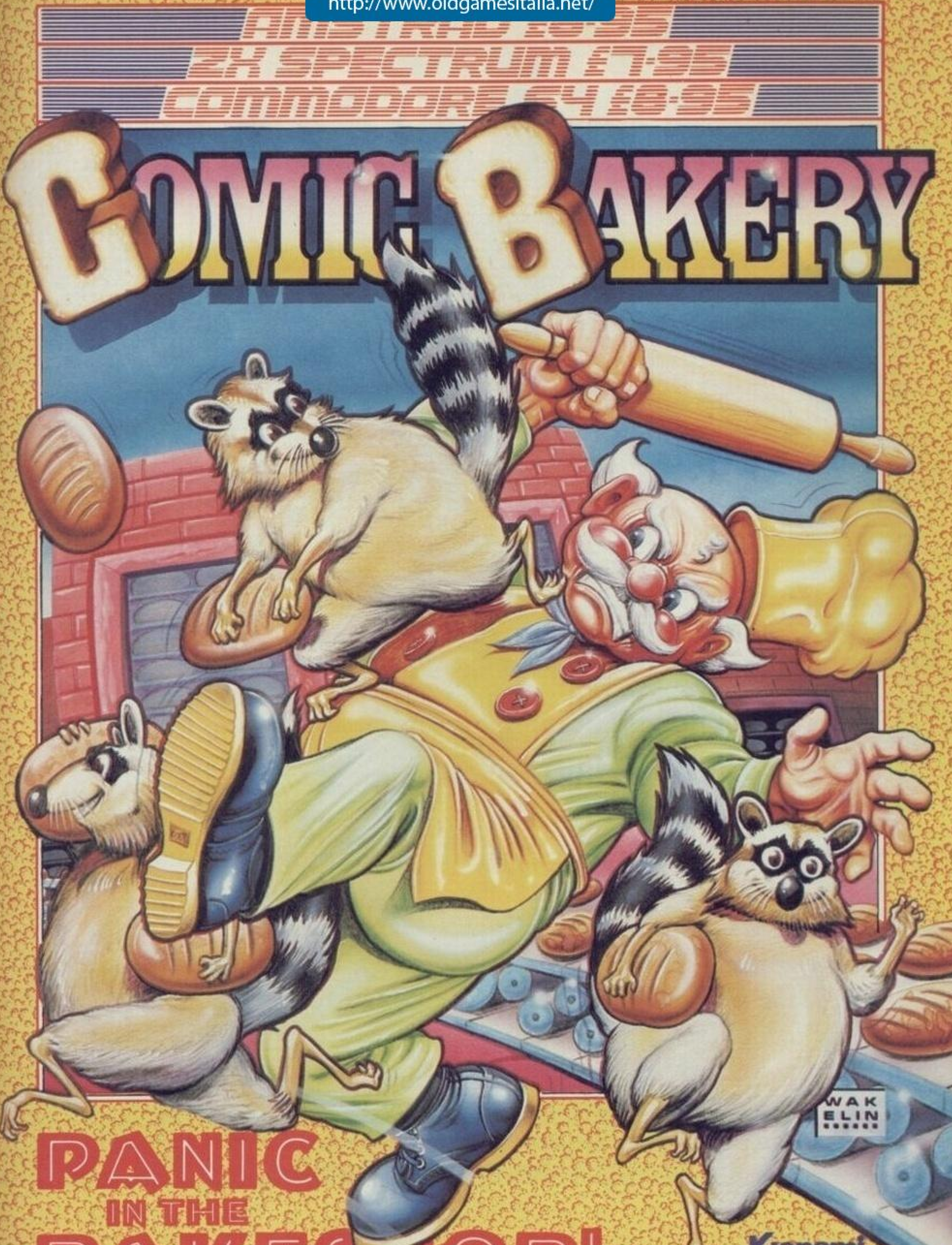


MAGIC MICRO MISSION

LIGHTING DIRECTOR
Roy Holby

VT EDITOR
Graham Thompson

CAMERAS
Paul Hacking


AMSTRAD £8·95
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COMIC BAKERY
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Fast and furious arcade fun. Help Joe the Baker defend his loaves from the Rascally Racoons.

Imagine Software is available from:
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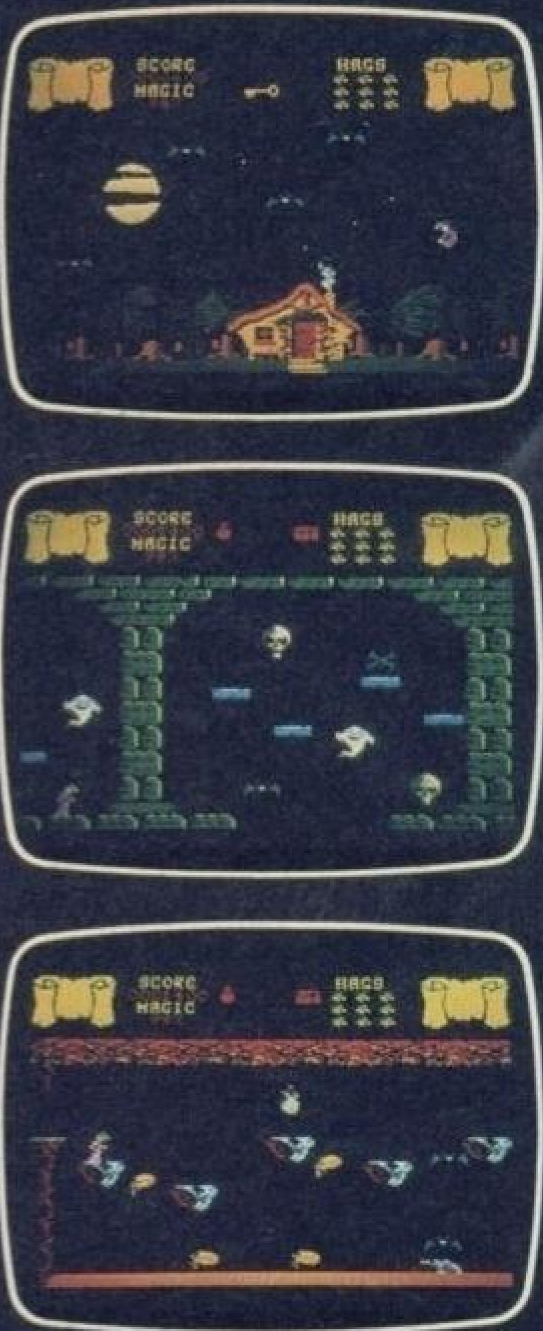
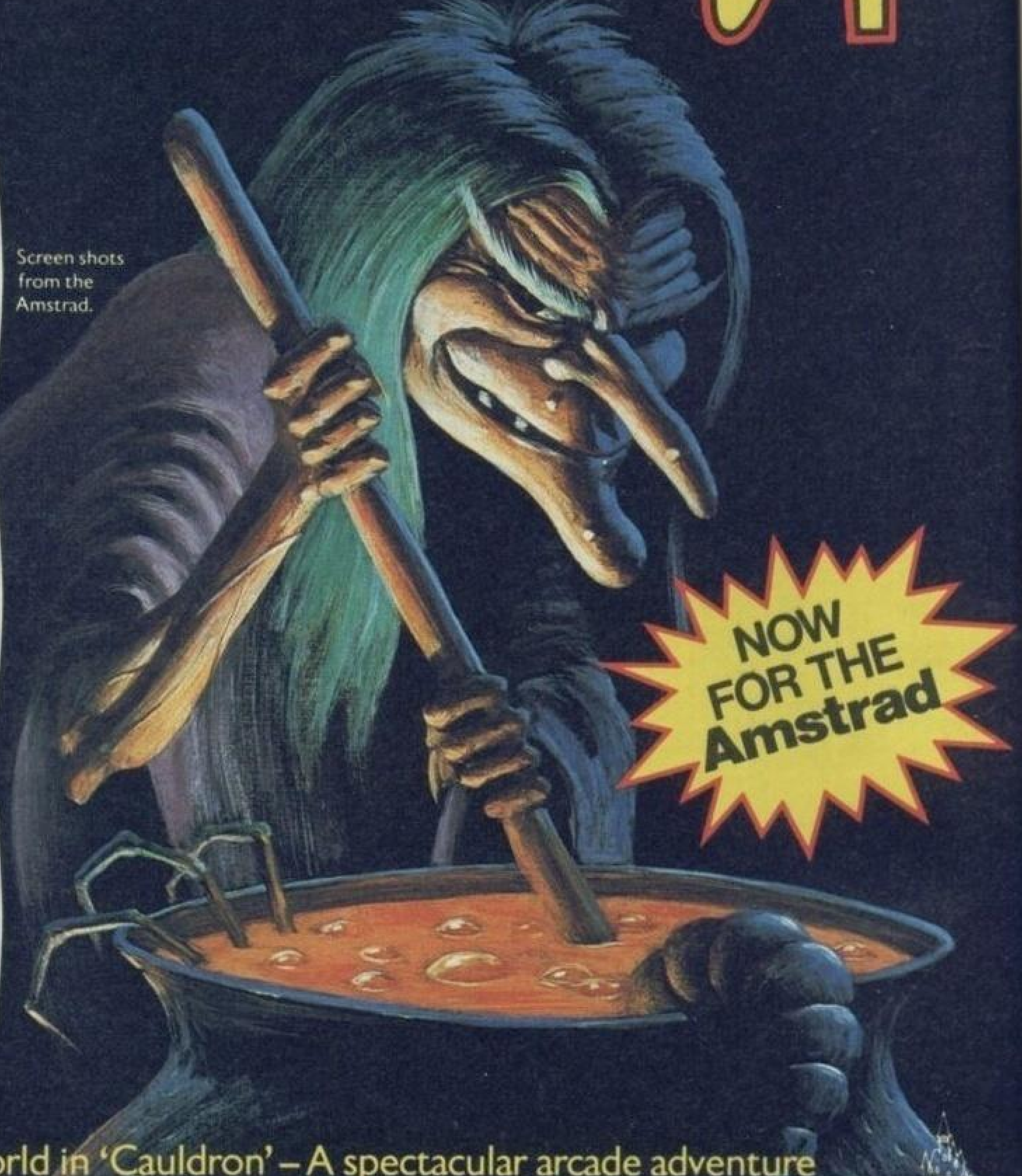
pectrum Shops and all good dealers.
agine Software (1984) Limited • 6 Central Street • Manc

PALACE SOFTWARE PROUDLY PRESENTS

CAULDRON



Screen shots from the Amstrad.



Explore an entire world in 'Cauldron' – A spectacular arcade adventure featuring shoot-'em-up and platform jumping.

Available from all good Computer Games Shops or direct from Palace Software, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NL.

PALACE software

Dear Palace Software,

Please send me ______________ cassette(s) of Cauldron (Amstrad) @£8.99

Please add 80p P&P to your order. Payment by cheque to Palace Software, Postal Order or by Access/Barclaycard No. ______________

Name: ______________

Address: ______________

____

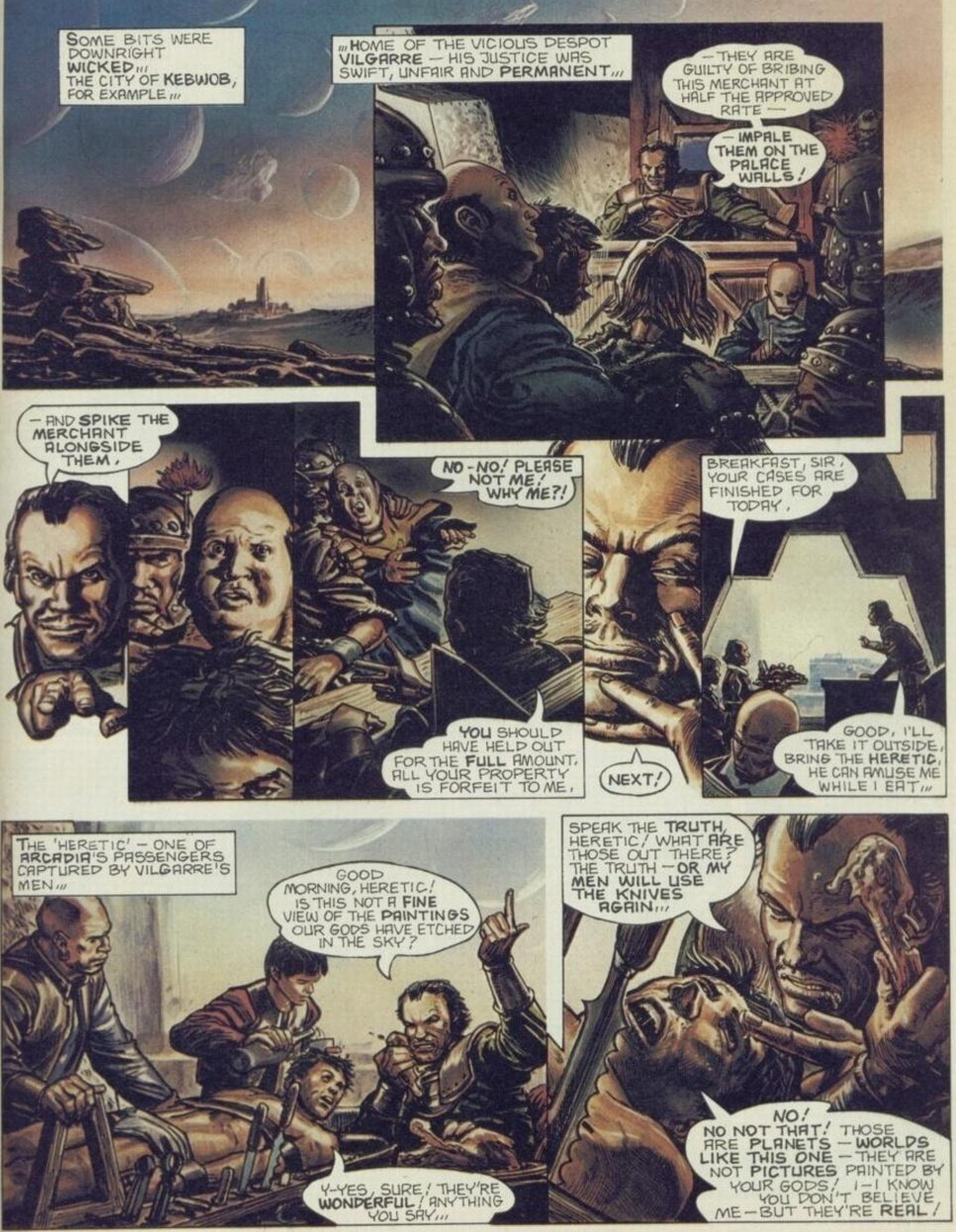
____

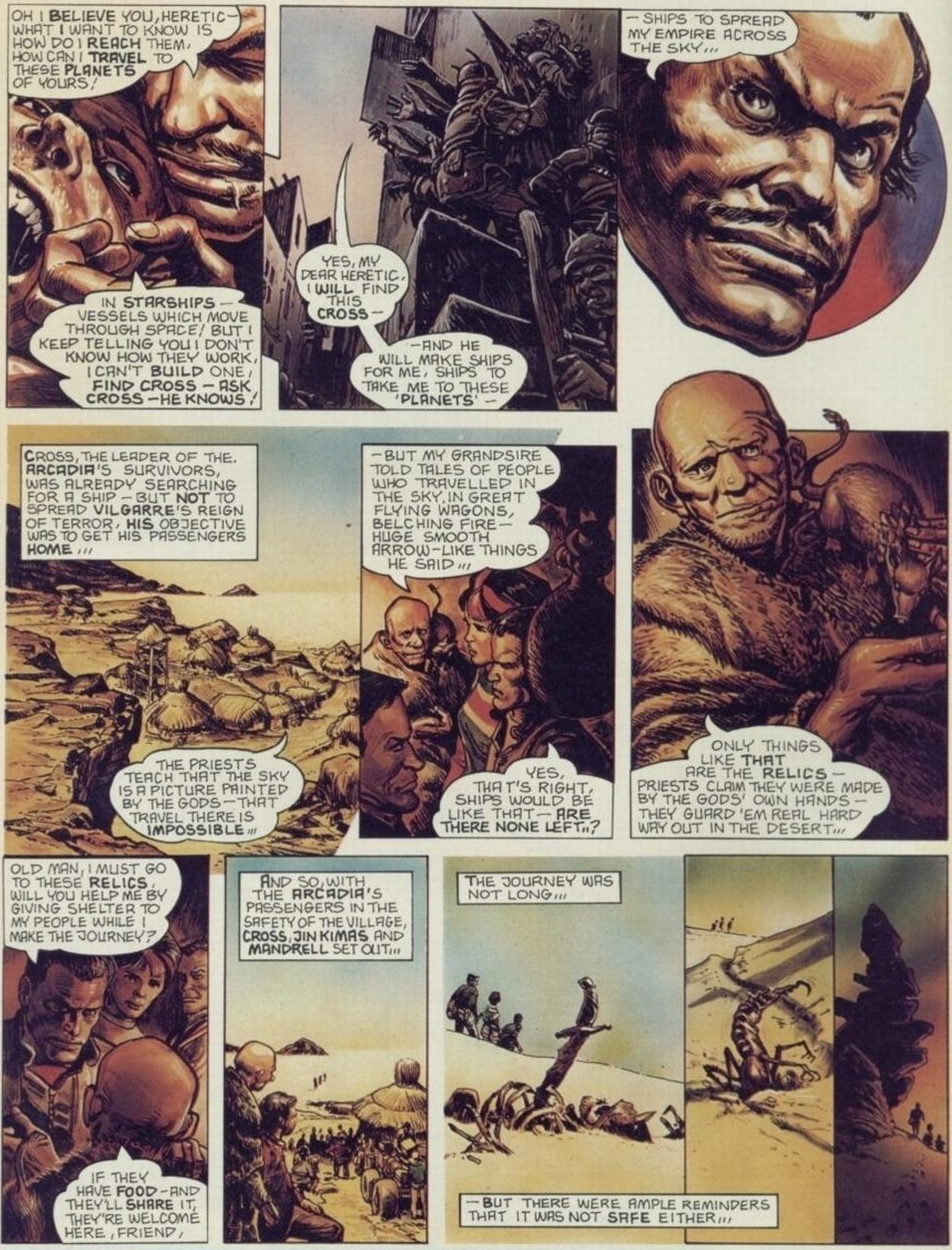
______________ Postal Code

Update:

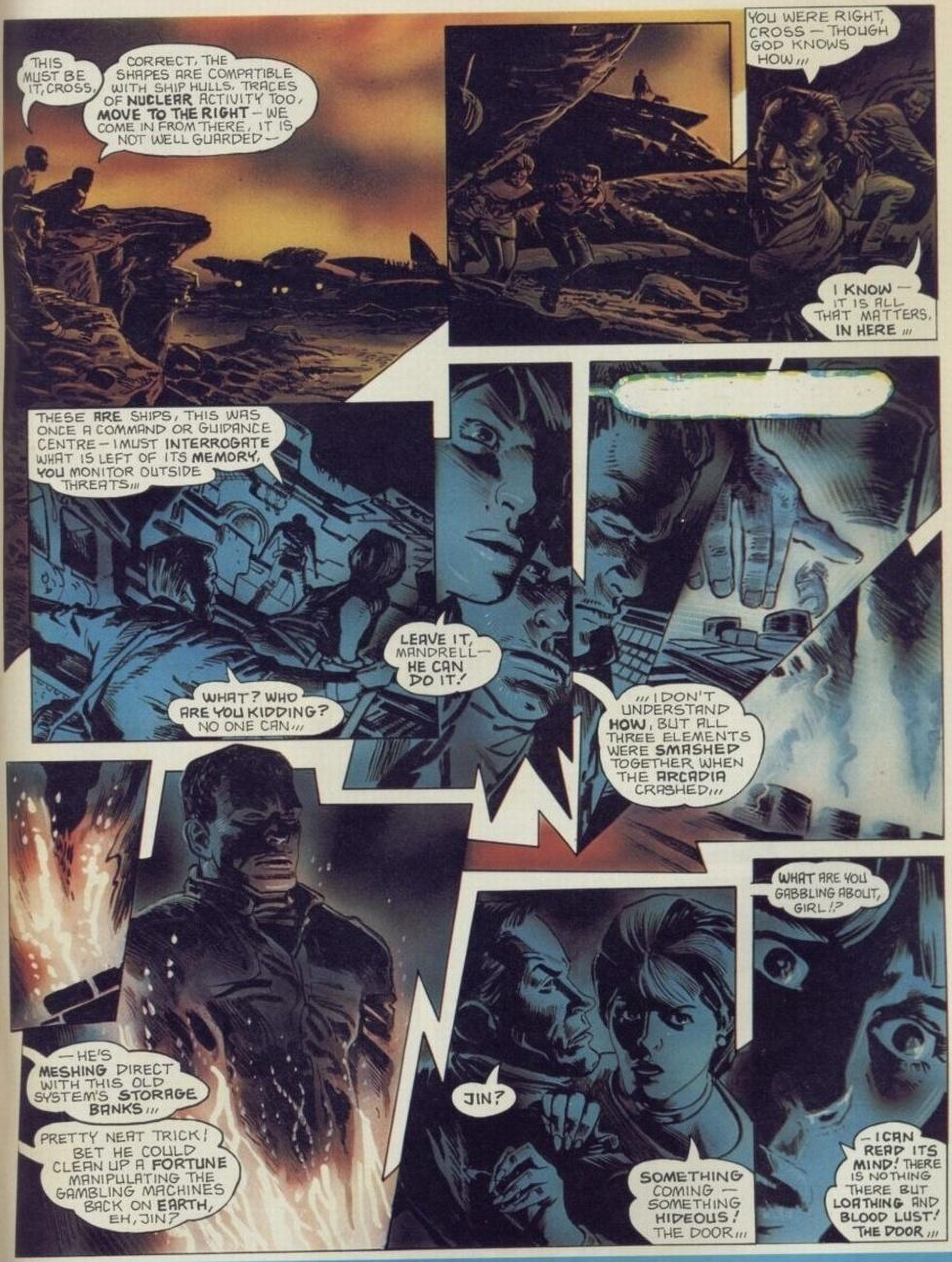
If you're marooned someplace, you worry about how to get home. Even old Crusoe, on a palm-fringed paradise with domestic servants, worried about the boat home – and he knew where he was. The passengers of the liner "Arcadia" knew only that their 'island' was one planet of an uncharted Dyson-Sphere solar system. It was a harsh, unfriendly place . . .

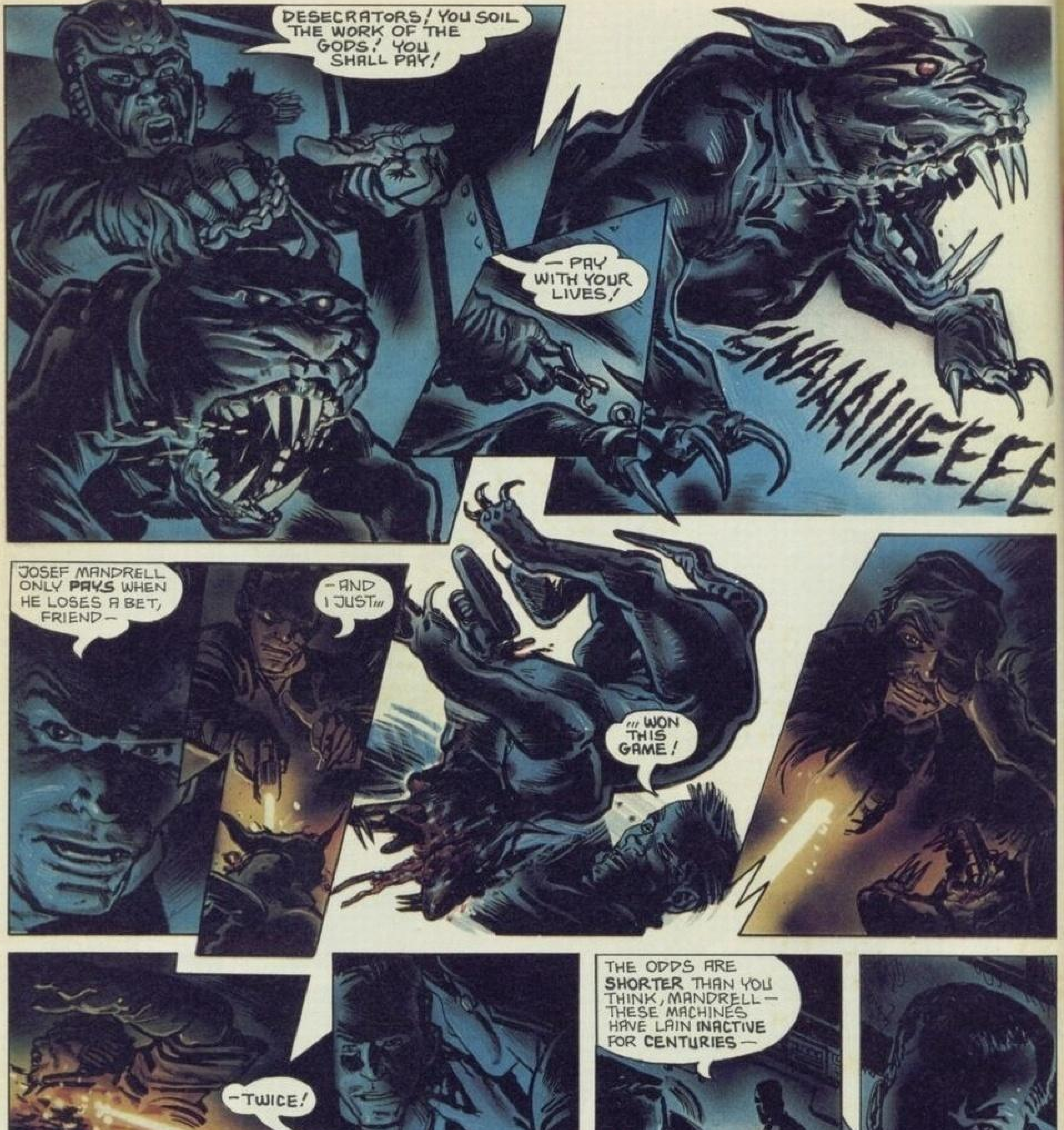
THE TERMINAL MAN


SOME BITS WERE DOWNRIGHT WICKED... THE CITY OF KEBWOB, FOR EXAMPLE...
...HOME OF THE VICIOUS DESPOT VILGARRE – HIS JUSTICE WAS SWIFT, UNFAIR AND PERMANENT...
– THEY ARE GUILTY OF BRIBING THIS MERCHANT AT HALF THE APPROVED RATE –
– IMPALE THEM ON THE PALACE WALLS!
– AND SPIKE THE MERCHANT ALONGSIDE THEM,
NO-NO! PLEASE NOT ME! WHY ME?!
YOU SHOULD HAVE HELD OUT FOR THE FULL AMOUNT. ALL YOUR PROPERTY IS FORFEIT TO ME.
NEXT!
BREAKFAST, SIR, YOUR CASES ARE FINISHED FOR TODAY.
GOOD, I'LL TAKE IT OUTSIDE. BRING THE HERETIC, HE CAN AMUSE ME WHILE I EAT...
THE 'HERETIC' – ONE OF ARCADIA'S PASSENGERS CAPTURED BY VILGARRE'S MEN...
GOOD MORNING, HERETIC! IS THIS NOT A FINE VIEW OF THE PAINTINGS OUR GODS HAVE ETCHED IN THE SKY?
Y-YES, SURE! THEY'RE WONDERFUL! ANYTHING YOU SAY...
SPEAK THE TRUTH, HERETIC! WHAT ARE THOSE OUT THERE? THE TRUTH – OR MY MEN WILL USE THE KNIVES AGAIN...
NO! NO NOT THAT! THOSE ARE PLANETS – WORLDS LIKE THIS ONE – THEY ARE NOT PICTURES PAINTED BY YOUR GODS! I-I KNOW YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME – BUT THEY'RE REAL!

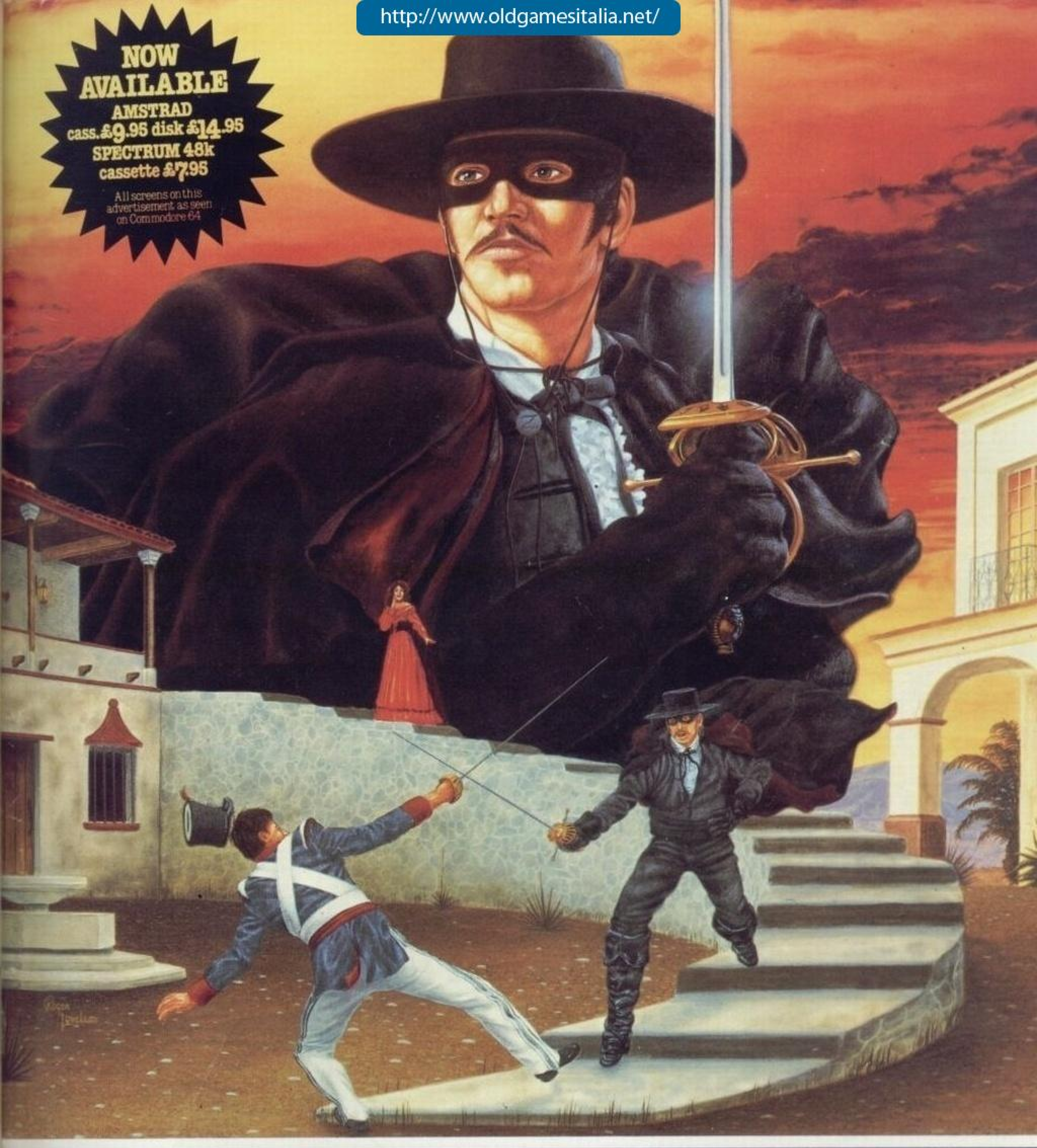

OH I BELIEVE YOU, HERETIC— WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS HOW DO I REACH THEM, HOW CAN I TRAVEL TO THESE PLANETS OF YOURS!
IN STARSHIPS — VESSELS WHICH MOVE THROUGH SPACE! BUT I KEEP TELLING YOU I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY WORK, I CAN'T BUILD ONE, FIND CROSS — ASK CROSS — HE KNOWS!
YES, MY DEAR HERETIC, I WILL FIND THIS CROSS —
— AND HE WILL MAKE SHIPS FOR ME, SHIPS TO TAKE ME TO THESE 'PLANETS' —
— SHIPS TO SPREAD MY EMPIRE ACROSS THE SKY...
CROSS, THE LEADER OF THE ARCADIA'S SURVIVORS, WAS ALREADY SEARCHING FOR A SHIP — BUT NOT TO SPREAD VILGARRE'S REIGN OF TERROR, HIS OBJECTIVE WAS TO GET HIS PASSENGERS HOME...
THE PRIESTS TEACH THAT THE SKY IS A PICTURE PAINTED BY THE GODS — THAT TRAVEL THERE IS IMPOSSIBLE...
— BUT MY GRANDSIRE TOLD TALES OF PEOPLE WHO TRAVELLED IN THE SKY, IN GREAT FLYING WAGONS, BELCHING FIRE — HUGE SMOOTH ARROW-LIKE THINGS HE SAID...
YES, THAT'S RIGHT, SHIPS WOULD BE LIKE THAT — ARE THERE NONE LEFT...?
ONLY THINGS LIKE THAT ARE THE RELICS — PRIESTS CLAIM THEY WERE MADE BY THE GODS' OWN HANDS — THEY GUARD 'EM REAL HARD WAY OUT IN THE DESERT...
OLD MAN, I MUST GO TO THESE RELICS, WILL YOU HELP ME BY GIVING SHELTER TO MY PEOPLE WHILE I MAKE THE JOURNEY?
IF THEY HAVE FOOD — AND THEY'LL SHARE IT, THEY'RE WELCOME HERE, FRIEND,
AND SO, WITH THE ARCADIA'S PASSENGERS IN THE SAFETY OF THE VILLAGE, CROSS, JIN KIMAS AND MANDRELL SET OUT...
THE JOURNEY WAS NOT LONG...
— BUT THERE WERE AMPLE REMINDERS THAT IT WAS NOT SAFE EITHER...

STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


THIS MUST BE IT, CROSS.
CORRECT. THE SHAPES ARE COMPATIBLE WITH SHIP HULLS. TRACES OF NUCLEAR ACTIVITY TOO. MOVE TO THE RIGHT — WE COME IN FROM THERE. IT IS NOT WELL GUARDED —
YOU WERE RIGHT, CROSS — THOUGH GOD KNOWS HOW...
I KNOW — IT IS ALL THAT MATTERS. IN HERE...
THESE ARE SHIPS. THIS WAS ONCE A COMMAND OR GUIDANCE CENTRE — I MUST INTERROGATE WHAT IS LEFT OF ITS MEMORY. YOU MONITOR OUTSIDE THREATS...
WHAT? WHO ARE YOU KIDDING? NO ONE CAN...
LEAVE IT, MANDRELL — HE CAN DO IT!
...I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW, BUT ALL THREE ELEMENTS WERE SMASHED TOGETHER WHEN THE ARCADIA CRASHED...
— HE'S MESHING DIRECT WITH THIS OLD SYSTEM'S STORAGE BANKS...
PRETTY NEAT TRICK! BET HE COULD CLEAN UP A FORTUNE MANIPULATING THE GAMBLING MACHINES BACK ON EARTH, EH, JIN?
JIN?
SOMETHING COMING — SOMETHING HIDEOUS! THE DOOR...
WHAT ARE YOU GABBLING ABOUT, GIRL!?
— I CAN READ ITS MIND! THERE IS NOTHING THERE BUT LOATHING AND BLOOD LUST! THE DOOR...


DESECRATORS! YOU SOIL THE WORK OF THE GODS! YOU SHALL PAY!
— PAY WITH YOUR LIVES!
SNAAAIIIEEEE
JOSEF MANDRELL ONLY PAYS WHEN HE LOSES A BET, FRIEND—
—AND I JUST...
...WON THIS GAME!
—TWICE!
THOUGH I DON'T FIGURE THE NEXT GAME TOO WELL —TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM THE BACKSIDE OF NOWHERE WITH A PSI-FREAK AND A MIXTURE OF MAN, MACHINE AND A COLLECTION OF BUGS IN A SHIP WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT...
THE ODDS ARE SHORTER THAN YOU THINK, MANDRELL— THESE MACHINES HAVE LAIN INACTIVE FOR CENTURIES—
— NONE OF THESE VESSELS HERE WILL EVER LEAVE THIS PLANET AGAIN!

More action next month!



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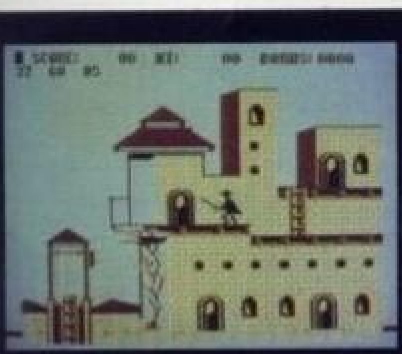
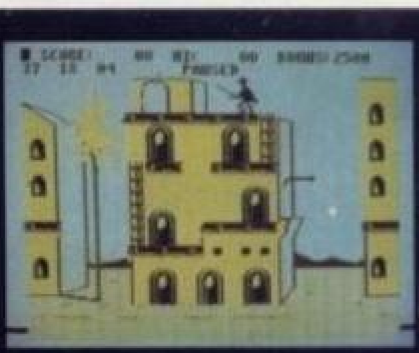
cassette £7.95

All screens on this
advertisement as seen
on Commodore 64





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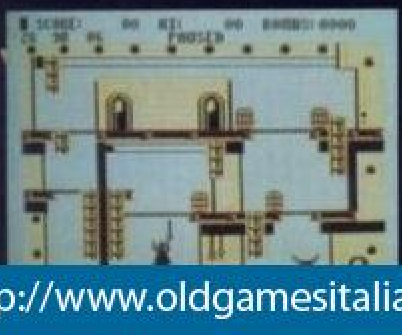

Datasoft

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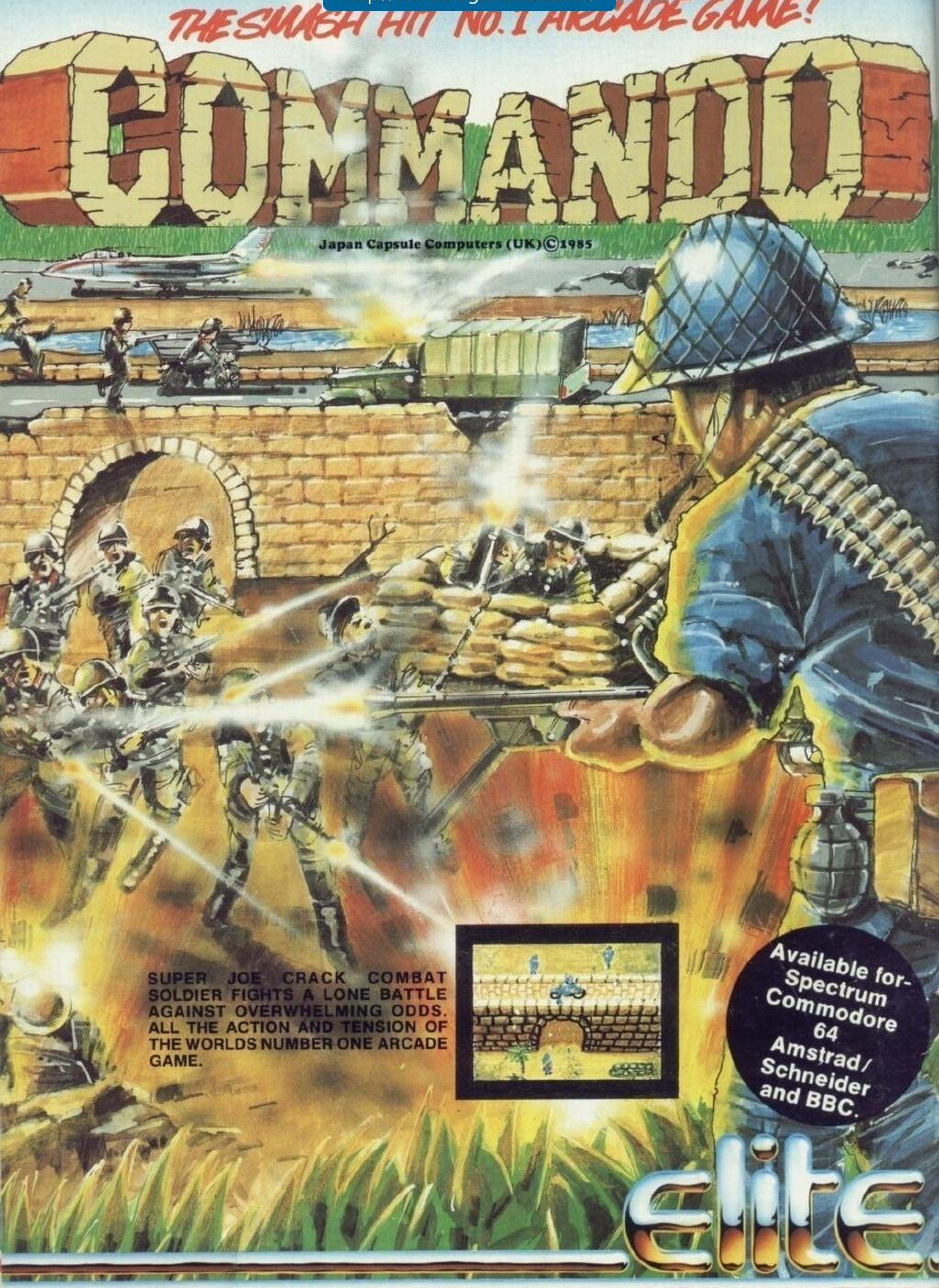
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